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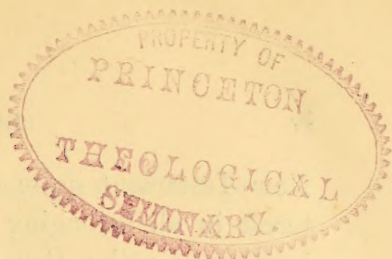
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 April 21, 1853.

THE
HISTORY
OF
THE CHURCH OF ROME,
TO THE
END OF THE EPISCOPATE
OF
DAMASUS,
A.D. 384.

BY
✓
EDWARD JOHN SHEPHERD, A.M.
RECTOR OF LUDDESDOWN.

LONDON:
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1851.

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P R E F A C E.

I AM not aware that there is any account of the Church of Rome, framed on the simple and obvious principle of merely collecting and arranging the testimony of History with regard to facts, and so presented to the reader as that he should have a right to believe, that when he has read what is before him, he has learnt all that is to be known. This is strange, considering the points at issue, and the extent, duration, and intensity of the controversies which have been carried on between that Church and the rest of Christendom.

Of course certain historical facts have been discussed over and over again for ages, and every original account of them has been made to mean every thing that it could mean, and, under the influence of party feeling, often a great deal more; but this is not such an account as I am speaking of; and I have thought, and think still, that there is something yet wanting which, if sincerely and truly performed, would be valued by the honest student of Church History.

We have accounts of the Church of Rome in the

New Testament quite enough to excite deep interest in all belonging to it. It is a very natural inquiry to make, Can we carry on the thread of history and trace the further progress of that Church? We have lists of its bishops. Do we know any thing about the men, who they were, and what they said and did? At the present time, and for a thousand years past, they have been making large claims on the obedience of the other prelates of Christendom. Did they always make such claims, and how were they received in the successive generations of the Church? Information on such questions would be full of interest.

A few years ago, thinking that there were sufficient materials to give a far more intimate knowledge of the Roman Church than the general reader then possessed, it occurred to me to endeavour to collect and arrange them. I had no object in view beyond a desire to represent the truth. It seemed to me to be a want. I was somewhat acquainted with the subject, and I had leisure. Besides, feeling assured, on other grounds, that Roman pretensions could have no sound foundation, I thought that a true and simple statement of historical facts would show their fallacious origin. I had seen that the early writings gave no support to the present Roman theory of a supremacy by divine right, and I thought that so long as that was shown, history supported Scripture and common sense in rejecting it. I had viewed the con-

troversy through a Protestant glass of the present day.

I accordingly commenced my work. A question, however, very soon arose touching the authenticity and genuineness of the writings I was using. I had, in former days, even in that general perusal which most ecclesiastical scholars undertake of the early writings, felt now and then unpleasant misgivings; but I had, like, perhaps, those before me, passed them over without minute investigation. Now, however, that I was using them for history I could no longer do so. The question of their authenticity and genuineness was irresistibly fixed on my attention, and must be answered. I spent some months, I believe, in a vain attempt to solve it. I grew disheartened, ill health supervened, a severe domestic affliction followed, and I gave up my History.

About a year and a half ago I determined to resume it, and again these writings and documents confronted me. I must own that I sought to evade the difficulty, and to write the history I meditated without grappling with them. After a while a better feeling returned. I felt that, although these writings had floated down the broad stream of history, if not unsuspected yet, as far as I knew, unchallenged * (the Romanist having triumphantly

* It is a curious fact that, after I had written this page, I received a letter by this morning's post, informing me of a note of Mr. Poole, in his "Life and Times of Cyprian," in which he

appealed to them, and the Protestant, without denying them, contenting himself with showing that they fell short of present Roman claims), still, if they were false originally, they had not become truths in their passage downwards; that I could not conscientiously propose for the belief of others what I was assured could not be true, and that I ought not to acquiesce in the circulation of falsehood. The impression on my own mind was clear that, after my attention had been directed to the subject, and I had proceeded so far as to entertain strong grounds for suspicion of fraud, it was my duty to pursue the inquiry, and endeavour, if possible, to come at the truth. I therefore recommenced my labours, and the result, which was very gradually, I may almost say unwillingly, arrived at, is now presented to the reader. Whether my proofs will be convincing to him is to be seen. I have endeavoured to make them as popular as I was able, and to free them as much as possible from what would be repulsive. I have sought, also, to carry the reader along with me, that he might understand what I was aiming at. He must recollect, however, that I cannot, in a work like

mentions a Raymund Missorius having attributed the Letters of Cyprian and Firmilian (I suppose the Letters confined to the question of Rebaptism) to the Donatists of Africa. I am not aware that, until to-day, I ever heard of Raymund Missorius; and I regret it, as I should have been glad to have seen his objections. The idea of a Donatist origin to these letters had, however, already passed through my mind and been rejected.

this, fully represent the grounds of my own convictions. I am confined to two or three arguments, more would be tedious, if even so many will be endured. I can convey to him but few of the convictions derived from the style, the character of the works, the connection of the forgeries with each other, and a multitude of lesser but cumulative facts and arguments which render the belief in their forgery so irresistible to myself. If, then, his confidence from what I allege shall be shaken in the several writings and documents, I request him to pursue the investigation himself, and I feel confident of the result.

But, whatever may be the effect of my arguments on my reader's mind, at all events, I trust, that, be he who he may, and of what party he may, he will give me credit for honesty of purpose; and also that he will not believe that I have hastily and rashly sought to unsettle faith in acknowledged writings; but on the contrary, that I have bestowed both labour and thought upon my book; and that, although there may be errors in it (and no doubt there are), yet that he will believe that they are there without my knowledge, and that I would not on any account be knowingly guilty of a suppression even, much more of an untruth. My errors, I can truly say, are those of oversight or ignorance.

I think I have proved, — or to say the least, have given such indications as will lead to the proof, that some documents which have been quoted as

authorities in the History of the Early Christian Church, are neither genuine nor authentic,—that they were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, and that the alleged facts which they contain are fictions; that they are, in short, forgeries of a date later than that which they bear, or to which they pretend. To what period each individual forgery belongs, I do not undertake to decide. I have, it will be seen, assumed that some of them may have been written before the end of the fifth century; but I confess at once that I do not see my way clearly. I have not sufficient grounds for any certainty. Some bear the marks of a much later age. It is not, however, of immediate importance in this enquiry (and may really be of none), to decide this point. Moreover, from an inability to see in each case the original manuscript, even if diplomatics were a more certain science than I suspect it to be, the date could, in many cases, be only very vaguely approached.

I must add that, having been thus, as it were, forced into this investigation, while I have felt as certain as I could be, that some of the documents and passages which I had at first taken in hand as materials for my intended work, are plainly spurious, there have been others about which I have entertained various shades of doubt. Under such circumstances I have not thought it necessary or even expedient to state every suspicion that has arisen in my own mind. I have been desirous to

preserve as much as I could of the small remains of history, which we possess ; and I have therefore felt myself justified, even in cases where I entertained doubts, to speak at times without imputation of doubt respecting some things which pass unquestioned in history.

I would suggest to those readers who may wish to make themselves masters of the subject to read the "Proofs and Illustrations," consecutively; later enquiries sometimes assume a knowledge of the previous ones.

Luddesdown, March 18. 1851.

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HISTORY
OF
THE CHURCH OF ROME,
ETC.

INTRODUCTION.

THE historian of the Church of Rome has no need to preface his labours by describing the city out of which that Church was gathered, and in which it professed to live a stranger. It will be enough for him to say that she was the queen of the cities of the ancient world, the mother of those legions, dreadful, terrible, and strong exceedingly, which had broken in pieces all the nations of the earth, and given her name to the world's empire. Seated on her seven hills, Rome beheld no rival.

At the time when the Apostles received from our Lord the command to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, the earth was one vast scene of moral darkness. It was a darkness which was even felt; and in no part of it, if we may trust

to the historian, the poet, and the satirist, was the darkness more intense and palpable than in Rome. Pre-eminent in glory and power, that city was pre-eminent also in guilt. Vice rushed to it from all quarters, either for concealment or display. Its magnitude served for either purpose. To the eye of the Christian moralist, looking down on such a city, and beholding its abandoned myriads, few events would have seemed more hopeless than their conversion — few cries would have seemed less likely to have been attended to than “the night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying ; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.” And ineffectual no doubt such a cry would have proved, had it been only the weak and helpless voice of man ; but he who had put the word into the mouth of his messengers, was the Lord of all power and might, and it accomplished that which he pleased, and prospered in the thing whereto he sent it.

The precise year when the tidings of a Saviour, and of the means of a moral restoration, were first announced in Rome, is unknown. As St. Paul, however, in his letter to the Roman Church (presumed to have been written about A.D. 57 or 58), stated that their faith was already spoken of throughout the whole world, it is probable that

the first messenger had arrived there not very long after our Lord's ascension; but who he was, and of what nation, does not appear. This only seems certain, that he was not an apostle.

But although the first stone of that building, which was to rear itself so high above the nations of the earth, was not placed by the hands of an apostle, yet an apostle laid its foundations; an apostle too of unrivalled usefulness and influence, and one who alone, of all the Apostles, was, in the days which this volume embraces, generally called by the short, but significant, title of "the Apostle." St. Paul's letter to the Roman Church cannot be exceeded in importance. It might have been imagined that he had foreseen her future destiny, and was providing that her light to the surrounding nations should be of the purest brightness. But not only was the Church at Rome favoured by his writings; it was blessed also by his presence. The malice of the Jews, overruled by the providence of God, led to his residence in Rome for "two whole years in his own hired house, where he received all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concerned the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

It is to St. Paul, in all probability, that the Roman Church is indebted for its episcopate. He is the only apostle whose name is connected in the Holy Scriptures with the city; and it is inconsistent with his letter to imagine a previous arrival of any other apostle. At the time of St. Paul's visit, the

Roman Church was in a flourishing condition ; there were apparently many members and several congregations. Satan, too, envious of the Church's progress, had already begun to sow his tares. Divisions had sprung up among them. There was clearly need, therefore, of a chief minister to correct what was erring, and put in order what was in confusion, as well as to continue the sacred ministry ; and yet no one of the persons whom St. Paul saluted in his letter appears to have held that office. If such was the state of the Church at the time of his arrival, it is difficult to believe, if we consider his proceedings in the East, that after he had lived at Rome for two years, he would leave the Church of that city, whether his removal was by death or otherwise, in a still unorganised and unprotected state. If divisions and heresies, if the wants of increasing congregations, required the episcopal office and control at Ephesus and in Crete, they would surely require it at Rome, the imperial city ; and if they did, we cannot reasonably doubt that St. Paul would supply the want.

The claim of St. Peter to be the founder of the Roman episcopate, rests on much slighter evidence. The Holy Scriptures impliedly oppose it. It is not only difficult to believe that St. Peter had been in Rome previous to the letters of St. Paul to Timothy (A.D. 65 or 66), but the sacred writings say nothing of any of his labours beyond the bounds of Asia Minor, Palestine, and Babylon ; and it is probable that he spent his days among the dispersed

Jews in those countries. Tradition, however, asserts his presence in Rome. Its evidence shall be examined. But if the inquiry be deferred till the close of the volume, we shall be better qualified to estimate its value.

In writing this history, I shall proceed as if I were writing the history of England. As I should detail all that is known of England in the successive reigns, under the titles of the successive kings, so I shall mention all that is known of the Roman Church in each episcopate, under the title of the bishop in whose episcopate the events occurred. So obscure, however, is the early history of the Roman Church, that the lists of its first bishops vary, not only in the order of the names, but also in the names themselves. In the writings of Irenæus (A.D. 180), there is a list representing the order as Linus, Anencletus, Clement; while in the writings of Tertullian, who is said to have lived about thirty or forty years later, there is a statement that Clement was ordained by St. Peter. This contrariety shows, even if the writings could be relied upon as genuine, how uncertain, in those early days, was the knowledge of the descent of the Roman episcopate. If the dates usually assigned to these bishops be correct, this last ordination is impossible, since St. Peter is said to have died about A.D. 66, and Clement is said not to have been bishop of Rome till A.D. 91. A difference also exists in the names of the early bishops: a Cletus is mentioned, as well as an Anencletus. The real facts will

probably never be ascertained ; and, if known, would be of but little importance, since, with the exception of Clement, the prelates are mere names.

Having premised these remarks, the usual order and dates of the succession of the Roman bishops will be generally adopted. If a different date be in any case assumed, the reason will be given.

BISHOPS OF ROME.

I. LINUS (A.D. 66—78).

*

NOTHING is known of Linus, or of the Roman Church during his episcopate. He is conjectured to have been the individual mentioned by St. Paul at the close of his second letter to Timothy.*

II. ANENCLETUS (A.D. 78—91).†

Nothing is known of Anencletus. But there are three spurious letters attributed to him, forming part of a collection called the Isidorian. Two of them are directed to all bishops, and one to the bishops of Italy. As they are notoriously spurious, they do not require particular notice.‡

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iii. 2.

† Ibid. 15.

‡ These forged letters of the Roman prelates, which may be found in the Councils, commence with Anencletus. Their main objects were to induce a belief, that the Roman bishop for the time being was the divinely appointed head of the Universal Church; that, from the very earliest times, he had been consulted and appealed to by all the Churches in Christendom;

III. CLEMENT (A. D. 91—100).

Several writings have been attributed to Clement. One only, however, is admitted to be genuine, and even that is supposed to be interpolated. It is a letter from the Roman to the Corinthian Church, in reply to one which the latter had sent, stating that they were torn by divisions, and that some of the Corinthian clergy had been factiously removed from their office. Tradition asserts that Clement wrote the reply of the Roman Church, showing the evils of strife and envy, and the duty of repentance, love, humility, and obedience.

Clement's letter was extant in the days of Eusebius ; and he says that from the resemblance of its style and ideas to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Clement had been supposed by some to have translated Paul's letter from the Hebrew into Greek.* All trace of this letter had been lost to the modern Church until the year 1628, when Cyril Lucar, patriarch of Constantinople, presented the very ancient manuscript of the Old and New Testaments, now known as the Codex Alexandrinus, to Charles I. At the end of it was found, as is sup-

and that he had been in the constant habit of issuing his decrees both to particular Churches and the Universal Church. These letters are always insisting that there lay an appeal from the sentence of every provincial synod to the Roman See. If the reader wishes to know more about them, he may see at the commencement of the "Proofs and Illustrations" in this volume, the account given by the learned and accurate Mosheim.

* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. iii. 38.

posed, the long lost letter of Clement to the Corinthians; and also a fragment of a second, which, according to Eusebius, was not acknowledged as genuine in his day.

Many other works are improperly attributed to Clement, as, the Apostolical Canons, the Apostolical Constitutions, the Recognitions, the Clementines, and an epitome of the two last works; also, some epistles to James, the brother of our Lord, beside other letters.

Clement has been supposed to be the convert of that name mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians.*

During the supposed period of this episcopate, Domitian was emperor of Rome. He commenced a persecution against the Christians, generally called the second, in which, beside many others, Flavia Domitilla, niece of Flavius Clemens, his relation, and one of the consuls, was sent into exile.†

Nothing further is known of Clement.

IV. EVARISTUS (A. D. 100—109).‡

None of the proceedings of this prelate are known. Two of the spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iii. 15.

† Ibid. 18.

‡ Ibid. 34.

V. ALEXANDER (A. D. 109—119).*

Nothing is known of this prelate. Three of the spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

VI. SIXTUS (A. D. 119—127).†

Nothing is known of this prelate. Two of the spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

VII. TELESOPHOS (A. D. 127—139).

Nothing is known of this prelate beyond a statement to be seen in the writings of Irenæus, unsupported however by other testimony, that he was a martyr.‡ One spurious Isidorian letter is attributed to him.

VIII. HYGINUS (A. D. 139—142).§

Nothing is known of this prelate. Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

About this time the Gnostic heretics, Valentinus Cerdo and Marcion, came to Rome.||

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iv. 1.

† Ibid. 4.

‡ Lib. adv. Hæres. iii. c. 3.

§ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iv. 11.

|| See for an account of the doctrines taught by these heretics, Mosheim, "De Rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum Magnum."

IX. PIUS (A. D. 142—157).*

No account of this prelate's proceedings is preserved. Four of the spurious letters are attributed to him.

X. ANICETUS (A. D. 157—168).†

Nothing is related of this prelate, beyond a story of an interview between him and Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. I have doubts about it. The reasons are given in the "Proofs and Illustrations," under the title, "VICTOR." One spurious Isidorian letter is attributed to him.

"If a man," it is the language of Gibbon, "were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power under the guidance of virtue and wisdom." Perhaps so far as the wishes of the later emperors (A.D. 138—180) were concerned, this panegyric may not be undeserved. But the deeds of the magistrates did not always correspond with the wishes of the emperors. It was during the episcopate of Anicetus that Justin received at Rome that sentence which has conferred upon him the imperishable name of martyr. In his second

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iv. 11.

† Ibid.

Apology, too, he records the following facts as having just occurred in the same city :—"A Roman matron, whose previous life had been dissolute, having been converted to Christianity, would no longer participate in the guilty excesses of her husband. After vain attempts to reform him, she sent him an instrument of divorce. Her husband in revenge denounced her as a Christian. She procured from the emperor a delay of her trial until after she had arranged her private affairs. Her husband then persuaded a centurion to seize one Ptolemy, who had been the means of her conversion, and ask him if he was a Christian. On the man's admitting it, he was put in chains, and at length brought before the city prefect, and on his confession of Christ immediately led to death. A certain Lucius who was present, shocked at this unjust sentence, remonstrated, saying that the man had been guilty of no crime, and that such a sentence was unworthy of the emperors. The judge made no reply, but asked him if he too was a Christian ? and upon his admission of the fact ordered him also to be executed."*

XI. SOTER (A. D. 168—177).†

Only one fact is stated of Soter, or of his Church during his episcopate. It is contained in a letter professedly written by Dionysius, the cotemporary bishop of Corinth.

* 2 Apol. s. 2.

† Euseb: Hist. Eccl. iv. 19.

Before, however, it is presented, it may be as well to say, that owing to the want of intercourse between the Roman and foreign Churches in the early centuries, were this history to be confined to the mere annals of the Roman Church, the reader would scarcely know anything of the cotemporary Christian communities ; and would be utterly unable, when the time shall arrive for relating the interference of Rome in the affairs of the Universal Church, to understand the character of the various Churches and their relative position with Rome ; a matter which, from Rome's peculiar pretensions, is part of her history. It will therefore be advisable, now and then, as occasion serves, to introduce some accounts of the other great divisions of the Universal Church, whose differences from the Roman Church and from each other were not merely geographical, but theological.

On the introduction, therefore, of the name of Dionysius, bishop of the Church of Corinth, I will shortly lay before the reader an account, which is given in Eusebius, of this bishop, and of the Grecian Churches at the close of the second century. There are difficulties in it, but it may be true.

The Church of Corinth had been founded by St. Paul, and had been a special object of his care. He had formed it out of a most sensual and depraved population, and it had consequently many moral hindrances to contend with. The city also, being one of great commercial importance, contained many Jews ; and their opposition did not diminish his difficulties. Amidst fleshly weakness and car-

nal schisms, the Church's spiritual growth had been sadly impeded ; and two most practical and healing epistles had been addressed to it by St. Paul. Although some painful occurrences had taken place after St. Paul's death, which they had communicated to the Roman community, still it may be hoped that those intestine divisions had soon ceased. In the early half of the second century, during the episcopate of Primus, the purity of their faith is favourably spoken of by the historian Hegesippus ; consequently a belief may be entertained that the Church was in a flourishing condition under Primus's successor, the Bishop Dionysius, whose letter to the Roman Church has led to the present digression.

It is highly probable that in the second century the bishop of the Corinthian Church, it being the only Apostolic Church in Greece, possessed considerable influence over all the Churches both within and without the isthmus. Of the number of these Churches, or of the exact number of their members, we have no means of forming an opinion. Our only knowledge of them is derived from quotations out of certain letters of Dionysius which had fallen under the notice of Eusebius. Whether it was considered part of the duty of his official position to exercise a special oversight over the Grecian Churches, or whether it was the overflowing of a noble zeal for their welfare, or both causes combined, can only be conjectured ; but his letters seem to have flown far and wide. The remains of ante-Nicene antiquity present no parallel to his

various exertions. One of his letters was sent into the Peloponnesus to the Lacedæmonians. Its object was catechetical—to instruct them in the faith and to inculcate peace and unity. Another was directed to their ancient rivals the Athenians. A sad change had occurred in the prosperity of that Church. Instead of having had their faith purified, and their holy purposes invigorated, by the martyrdom of their bishop Publius, they had become negligent of their profession, and had almost entirely relinquished it. By the efforts of Quadratus however, successor to Publius, the Church had been again collected, and the dying embers of their faith had received a new excitement. The object of Dionysius's letter was still further to excite, and keep alive, this holy flame. The efforts of these bishops were successful. In the next century, Origen states that the Christians of Athens stood out in marked contrast with the Heathen population of that city.

He also sent two letters across the sea into Crete. One to all the Churches in the island, although Gortyna is especially mentioned, partly perhaps on account of its importance, and partly on account of the firmness of the Church, and its bishop Philip, under many trials. This letter was to warn the Churches against heretical corruptions. The other he directed to the Church at Gnosus, another chief Cretan city, in which he exhorted its bishop Pinytus not to enjoin upon the brethren the heavy burthen of chastity, that is, not to dissuade them

from marriage, but to have respect to the weakness of the multitude.

But if this account be correct, Greece was by no means a limit to Dionysius's care of the Churches. The heresy of Marcion, which had sprung up on the shores of the Euxine, had infected the cities along its coasts; and Dionysius is said to have sent two letters, one to the Church at Nicomedia, refuting the heresy, and maintaining the true faith, and the other to all the Pontic Churches, specially naming Amastris, whose bishop was Palmas. This letter he had written at the request of two persons, called Bacchylides and Elpistus. Its contents, although seeming to be various, were probably mostly connected with the Marcion heresy. He explained some portions of the Holy Scripture, made some lengthened observations on marriage and chastity, and issued an injunction that they should welcome all who wished to return to the Church, from whatever lapse, whether from sinful passions, or from heresy.

Eusebius had also seen a letter to a lady called Chrysophora full of spiritual instruction.

In short, it is clear from the account that Dionysius was looked upon with almost apostolic reverence. His letters were collected, and his advice was frequently sought, by all Churches. Nay, so high was his authority, that the heretics thought it worth their while to alter and corrupt his letters, and thus to win an entrance for their opinions under pretence of his sanction.

Another of his letters is said to have been sent

to the Roman Church : the following extract from it is inserted in the “Ecclesiastical History” of Eusebius* :—

“It has ever been your habit to benefit the brethren in various ways, and to send assistance to the Churches in every city, both relieving the wants of the poor, and affording help to the brethren condemned to the mines. By a succession of these gifts, Romans, you preserve the hereditary customs of Romans, and your most excellent bishop Soter has not only continued, but added to, them. He not only conferred the gift, but exhorted (as an affectionate father would his children) those who went up to him with words of blessing.”†

This letter of Soter’s, Dionysius states, they should always read with Clement’s. Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to Soter.

XII. ELEUTHERUS (A. D. 177—193).‡

Nothing is positively known of Eleutherus, or of his Church during his episcopate. The Churches of Lyons and Vienne are said to have sent a letter to Eleutherus on the subject of the Montanist movement, which is lost, or rather perhaps never existed; and another, recommending Irenæus, a

* Extracts from his other letters would have been extremely interesting, if for no other purpose than to know whether he always wrote in such a peculiar style. His practice seems to have been much better than his writing. I doubt the letter.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iv. 23.

‡ Ibid. v. init.

presbyter in their Church, to the notice of Eleutherus. That letter is preserved.*

There is one spurious Isidorian letter attributed to him.

Bede states that Lucius, a king of Britain, sent a letter to Eleutherus, requesting that through his command he might be made a Christian, and that his pious desire was soon realised; also, that the faith thus received was maintained by the Britons in purity and peace until the days of Diocletian.†

As, however, the British Churches did not adopt the Roman mode of keeping Easter, and differed in several other particulars from that Church, no confidence can be placed in Bede's statement. It has, I believe, no confirmation.

XIII. VICTOR (A. D. 193—202).‡

In the usual histories, Victor's episcopate is signalised by the excommunication, as far as he could effect it, of the Asiatic Churches, for their refusal to continue their paschal fast to the Sunday. Such an interference is so monstrous, and particularly as taking place in the second century, when feelings

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. v. 4. Here again is to be noted a very unintelligible style of writing, and yet their letter on the persecution, if composed by them, is very clearly written. There seems a fatality of this kind affecting many documents relating to the Roman Church. The notice of this letter in Jerome's "Book of Ecclesiastical Writers" is very suspicious, from a singular use of the word "nomen." This will be explained as we proceed.

† Hist. Eccl. i. 4.

‡ Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. 22.

of piety, humility, and brotherly love are supposed, and I believe justly, to have been prevalent in the Churches, that I was led to investigate its accuracy. The result of my inquiry has been to satisfy myself that the statement is one of a series of forgeries that have descended to us. The evidence on which I have arrived at this conclusion is given hereafter.*

Theodotus, a shoemaker, and a native of Byzantium, probably the first Gentile heretic who denied the divinity of Christ, accounting him to be a mere man, was expelled from the Church by Victor.†

Four spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

But although I do not believe Victor to have been guilty of the conduct just mentioned towards the Asiatics, I shall still take this opportunity of introducing to the reader's notice the Asiatic Churches.

The territory comprised under the word Asia was differently understood by the ancients; but I am at present alluding to the countries under the government of the Roman proconsul, and which were Mysia, Lydia, Caria, and Phrygia. These provinces contained many Churches, and were inhabited, I believe, by a far greater number of Christians than any other portion of the empire. There is little doubt that most of the cities, if not all, were at this time episcopal residences; but

* See Proofs and Illustrations, under the title, "VICTOR."

† Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. 28.

unless the cities were distinguished by some civil importance, or the sees by the excellence or martyrdom of their bishops, or by some other special circumstances, no mention is made of them by Eusebius, to whom we are mainly indebted for our information. Among those known by name, are the Apocalyptic Churches; several Churches mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, as Colosse, Miletus, Troas; among them, also, was Hierapolis. Pre-eminent over all, however, was the Church of Ephesus, the metropolis of the proconsulate, the city of the great goddess Diana. It was an apostolical see, having been planted by St. Paul, and also favoured with his residence and special oversight for more than two years. Before his death he had confided it to the care of Timothy, his own son in the faith; and afterwards it is said to have enjoyed the presence of the apostle John. No Church, therefore, had been blessed with a more continued apostolical teaching and guidance than the Ephesian, and it had grown and prospered. Our Lord himself had borne witness to its works, and labours, and patience, and its abhorrence of evil persons and heretics.

The next in fame was the Church at Smyrna, a city in the proconsulate, second only to Ephesus, and also addressed by our Lord in terms of praise. It had been under the episcopal guidance of Polycarp, one of the brightest names in the early Church. He suffered martyrdom in the city.* A

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iv. 15.

letter, said to have been written by him, is still extant.

Sardis, another of the Apocalyptic Churches, may be specially named. To this Church, St. John had been commissioned to give a solemn rebuke. It was favoured, a few years afterwards, by having for its bishop, Melito, one of the lights of the second century. He was a voluminous writer; and, judging from the few fragments that are left, the loss of his works is to be regretted.

The last Church that I shall especially name was that of Hierapolis, which had numbered among its bishops, Papias and Apollinaris, both celebrated characters in their day; the former a martyr. He had been acquainted with the daughters of Philip the apostle, who is said to have been buried at Hierapolis, and had also been a friend of Polycarp, and perhaps even a disciple of St. John.

XIV. ZEPHYRINUS (A. D. 202—219).*

Nothing is known of Zephyrinus. Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

In his episcopate, a very curious circumstance is said to have occurred at Rome, which is thus mentioned by the writer, who combated the heresy of Artemon. This heresy resembled somewhat the heresy of Theodotus, in considering Christ as a

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. 28.

mere man. The writer was apparently a cotemporary. He says, "I will remind many of the brethren of a fact which has occurred in our day, and which, had it occurred in Sodom, would, I think, have been an effectual warning even to them. There was a confessor called Natalis, who lived, not a long while ago, but in our own times. This person suffered himself to be beguiled by Asclepiodotus and another Theodotus, who was a money-changer. They were both disciples of Theodotus the shoemaker. He was the first person who had entertained this opinion, or rather folly, and had been excommunicated by Victor, the then bishop. Natalis was induced, for a monthly salary of 150 denarii, to be ordained the bishop of their heresy. While he was with them, he was frequently warned in visions by the Lord; for Christ, our merciful God and Lord, was unwilling that one who had been a confessor of his sufferings should perish out of the Church. But when, owing to his place of eminence among them, and the love of gain which destroys so many, he paid but slight attention to the visions, he was at length scourged by holy angels, and severely punished during the whole night; so that, when morning came, he arose, and having put on sackcloth, and sprinkled himself with ashes, in haste and with tears he fell down before Zephyrinus the bishop, and placed himself under the feet; not only of the clergy but also of the laity, deeply affecting with his tears the merciful Church of the compassionate Christ. After much entreaty, exhibiting at the same time the

marks of the stripes which he had received, he was, with some difficulty, re-admitted to communion.”*

Caius, said to be a Catholic writer at Rome during this episcopate, enumerates only thirteen epistles as written by St. Paul, the epistle to the Hebrews not being at that time regarded by the Roman Church as Pauline. Eusebius is made to add, that even in his day there were some Romans of the same opinion. Also the Apocalypse is attributed by Caius to Cerinthus the heretic. Similar doubts are expressed respecting the Apocalypse in a letter attributed to Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria.†

Origen is said to have visited Rome about this time, from a desire to behold the very ancient Church of the Romans. He did not stay long, and returned to Alexandria.‡

XV. CALLISTUS (A. D. 219—223). §

Nothing is known of this prelate, or of the Roman Church during his episcopate. Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

* Laurence, second archbishop of Canterbury, had read this story to some purpose. See Bed. Hist. Eccl. ii. 5.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vi. 20.; vii. 25.

‡ Ibid. vi. 14.

§ Ibid. 12.

XVI. URBANUS (A. D. 223—230).*

Nothing is known of this prelate, or of the Roman Church during his episcopate. One spurious Isidorian letter is attributed to him.

XVII. PONTIANUS (A. D. 230—235).†

Nothing is known of this prelate, or of the Roman Church during his episcopate. Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

XVIII. ANTEROS (A. D. 235, 236).‡

Nothing is known of this prelate, or of the Roman Church during his episcopate. One spurious Isidorian letter is attributed to him.

XIX. FABIAN (A. D. 236—251).

There had now been a long peace to the Churches, and the emperor Philip (A. D. 244—249) was even said to be favourably disposed towards Christianity. But the time had not yet arrived for kings being its nursing fathers and queens its nursing mothers. Many severe trials were first to be undergone, and much blood to be shed.

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vi. 21.

† Ibid. 23.

‡ Ibid. 29.

Decius, through hatred of Philip as is reported, signalised his accession to the imperial throne by a severe persecution of the Christians. Among its victims were Fabian, bishop of Rome, and the bishops of Antioch and Jerusalem.

Nothing more is known of Fabian, except an odd story accounting for his election to the see.

It is said that, having come from the country with some friends, he was at Rome when the Christians had assembled to elect a successor to Anteros; that whilst they were canvassing the merits of different celebrated and well-known individuals, a dove descended upon the head of Fabian, of whom no one was thinking. It was received for an omen, and Fabian was at once chosen bishop.*

XX. CORNELIUS (A. D. 251, 252).†

It is said that there was an interval of more than a year between the martyrdom of Fabian and the election of Cornelius. Although that statement rests, so far as I know, only on the authority of the letters attributed to Cyprian, supposed to be the cotemporary bishop of Carthage, and Eusebius gives nearly three years to the episcopate of Cornelius, still some interval is not an improbability. It may have taken some time to find a person bold enough to mount a chair from which

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vi. 29.

† Ibid. 39.

the last occupant had only yesterday been led to execution.

In this episcopate occurred the schism of Novatian, a presbyter of the Roman Church. It arose out of the question, What was to be done with those members of the Church who, during the persecution, had lapsed? that is, had either through fear or indifference sacrificed to the Heathen deities, or purchased from the magistrates an exemption from the fiery ordeal. The general feeling of the Church respecting them was, that, on the proof of a true penitence, they should be again admitted to communion. Novatian denied the power of the Church to receive them at all. He, however, equally urged on the lapsed the duty and necessity of prayer and penitence; but he taught that to God only must they look for pardon; the Church could grant no pardon: if it pretended to do so, it would be a partaker of their sin, and become idolatrous also.

Of the particulars of this schism there are no trustworthy accounts. Even if we adopt the letters of Cyprian, the few statements which they afford only create difficulties. A series of bishops arose of this sect, who do not seem to have assumed a local designation.

There is a letter attributed to Cornelius, on the character and conduct of Novatian. It is directed to Fabius, bishop of Antioch. It is, no doubt, a forgery, and it is a mercy to Cornelius to view it in that light.*

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vi. 43.

If reliance is to be placed upon the accounts of this period, we ought to believe that a controversy arose during this episcopate, between Cornelius and Cyprian, on the question, Whether persons who had been baptized by heretics should, on the rejection of their heresy, and the confession of the true faith, be baptized in the Church. The affirmative side was taken by Cyprian and the African Church; and the negative by Cornelius and the Churches of Italy. The Roman Church admitted the baptism of heretics, and thought that only imposition of hands was necessary.*

Three of the spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to Cornelius.

His two letters to Cyprian will be noticed hereafter.†

XXI. LUCIUS (A.D. 252, 253).‡

Nothing is known of the proceedings of this prelate. A letter of Cyprian addresses him as a confessor. One spurious Isidorian letter is attributed to him.

XXII. STEPHEN (A.D. 253—257).§

Stephen is said to have held the same opinions with Cornelius on the baptizing of heretics, and there are statements of his having excommunicated the further half of Asia Minor because they would

* Ruff. transl. of Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vii. 2.

† See Proofs and Illustrations, under the title "CYPRIAN."

‡ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vii. 2.

§ Ibid.

not agree with him. But this account I regard as equally fabulous with that of Victor's excommunication of the nearer half of that much calumniated country. The evidence on this point is reviewed in the latter part of this volume.*

Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

XXIII. SIXTUS II. (A. D. 257—265).†

I have, in this and the next episcopate, varied from the usually received dates, because some forgeries are connected with them.

As far as history is concerned, it matters not what dates are assigned to the Roman bishops before the Council of Nice, if only Fabian's episcopate coincides with the reign of Decius; any other arrangements are immaterial, as the bishops, beyond their mere names, are unknown to genuine history.

Eusebius in his "Ecclesiastical History," and Jerome in his translation of the "Chronicle of Eusebius," regard the deaths of Sixtus of Rome and Dionysius of Alexandria as cotemporary events, and the period to be somewhere about the year 265. I have assumed that to be the true date. So long as the deaths are made cotemporary, the exact date is immaterial.

The Roman Church has only given two years to the episcopate of Sixtus. Some forgeries, which

* See Proofs and Illustrations, under the titles, "CYPRIAN" and "STEPHEN."

† Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vii. 5.

they were afterwards guilty of, could not be reconciled with his existence, and he was therefore compelled to retire prematurely.*

Nothing is known of this prelate beyond the alleged receipt of some very doubtful letters from Dionysius of Alexandria. He is said to have been a martyr, but only on the authority of the Cyprianic letters.

Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

As Dionysius of Alexandria has been mentioned, I will take advantage of his name to introduce some notice of the Church of which he was a distinguished ornament.

There is a tradition that the Church of Alexandria was founded by St. Mark. The first twelve bishops resemble the early Roman prelates, in being persons of whom but little has been recorded.

Demetrius, the eleventh bishop, is mainly known through his contests with Origen, or on account of Origen; and Heraclas the twelfth, through his being head of the Catechetical School. The thirteenth bishop was the Dionysius already mentioned. The Alexandrian diocese was probably the largest then existing. It extended along the coasts from the eastern borders of Egypt till it met with the African diocese at the Greater Syrtes, and southward it had no defined limits. All the Churches within this vast extent of country appear to have been under the direct control of the bishop of Alexandria.

* See Proofs and Illustrations, under the title, "DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA."

The peculiar characteristics of the Alexandrian Church were derived from its position, and its consequent catechetical school.

During the dynasty of the Ptolemies, Alexandria had been the focus of the philosophy and science of the old world. Learned men from all countries had assembled in its Museum, attracted as well by the monarch's most gratifying reception and liberal patronage, as by the society within its walls, and the stores of learning which its noble library contained. A little before the Christian era, the Ptolemies, the Museum, and a large portion of the library had perished. The two latter were restored by the Cæsars; and though there was now no monarch on the spot to give the impulse almost necessary for the energetic pursuit of contemplative studies, and its library was no longer the accumulation of three centuries, still Alexandria continued to be the resort of learned men; a traditional feeling, it may be, hallowing the spot as sacred to letters.

It is said that the Alexandrian Church had from early times possessed a school; but no actual notice of it appears earlier than in the latter half of the second century. Athenagoras and Pantænus are each reported to have been its first masters or presidents.

The two accounts may be reconciled by conjecturing that an elementary school may have existed very early for catechumens, but that in the course of time this had been found insufficient. The Church was peculiarly placed. It was surrounded by learned professors of opposite creeds. It was

attacked by Jew and Pagan, and had to protect itself against all the weapons which the armouries of these two assailants could produce. It was deemed necessary by the rulers of the Church, that a school of a higher grade — something more, as respects the manner and subjects of its teaching, in the nature of an university, should be established, which might not only furnish the Christians with information of a less elementary kind, but also, by embracing general literature, attract Pagans to its lectures, and even quietly prepare them for receiving the Christian faith. This conception, as far as learning went, was well realised; and the Church obtained masters of the first celebrity. Clement and Origen, who presided over the school for nearly the fifty years preceding Dionysius, are undying names. But although the influence which these men exercised over the Pagans was very considerable, and numbers were convinced by them of the truth of Christianity, and induced to profess it, still there is no doubt that their writings were very mischievous to the Christian Church. The Holy Scriptures became tools for their wits. Advancing under the guidance of an undisciplined imagination, no part of the sacred writings was exempt from their attack. Origen's theory of a triple sense in the language of Scripture (a literal, moral, and a mystical sense) struck at the root of inspiration; and did anything but teach the proper frame of mind in which revealed truth should ever be approached. His speculations on doctrine were most dangerous and unjustifiable. This is learnt

even from what is known of them through translations, although the translator sought to remove whatever would offend the ear of Western orthodoxy. There can be little doubt that Origen helped to pave the way for those ecclesiastical disturbances which, in the next century, were as fatal to the Eastern Church as the inroads of the Barbarians to the empire.

His almost immediate successor in the school was Dionysius, subsequently bishop of Alexandria, and the cause of this digression.

XXIV. DIONYSIUS (A. D. 265—269).*

Nothing is known of this prelate. The complaint said to have been made to him by some persons belonging to the Pentapolis, against a book written by Dionysius of Alexandria, the council he held, and the refutation of his namesake, are all, it is submitted, fables.†

Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

One of the most important ecclesiastical events of the third century, the trial and deposition for heresy of Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, the queen city of the East, and the third see in Christendom, took place in this episcopate. He denied the divinity of our Lord.‡

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vii. 7.

† See Proofs and Illustrations, under the title, "DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA."

‡ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vii. 27--30.

I shall take advantage of this allusion to Antioch to give a short sketch of the history of its Church.

The city of Antioch prided itself on having been founded by all that was noble and glorious in the ancient world, and for centuries before the period in question it had been the metropolis of Asia. It was seated on the river Orontes, and distant about fifteen miles from the sea. The country around it was of the most fertile description. The mountains vied with the well-watered plains, and the plains with the mountains, in the abundance and variety of their productions. Its climate was delicious. Such a city, from one cause or another, from motives of luxury, gain, or display, may readily be imagined to have been the resort of all nations. "Sitting in its market-place," says Libanius, "you see before you the inhabitants, and the manners of all the cities in the world." In short, within it and around it, every art and device were employed to make sensual life desirable. It is to be noted that amongst the inhabitants were many Jews, to whom the Seleucidæ had granted privileges equal with those of other citizens. These privileges had been continued by the Romans.

The first announcement of the preaching of the Christian faith at Antioch is thus given in the Acts of the Apostles:—"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene; which, when they were come

to Antioch, spoke unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”*

The exact year when these occurrences took place is not perhaps decided, but it must have been very early. Although St. Paul then was not the first preacher at Antioch, it seems that he was the apostolic founder of the Church. He visited the city frequently, and resided in it for a long time. It was during one of his residences that St. Peter joined him, and one of the most singular facts recorded in the history of the Apostles took place.

In the council at Jerusalem, St. Peter had spoken most manfully and boldly for the liberty of the Gentile converts; and on his arrival at Antioch he showed the sincerity of his professions by publicly

* Acts, xi. 19—26.

eating with them. While he was living in this manner certain Jews came from James at Jerusalem. They were men, probably, of the high Jewish party, who had not cordially embraced the decrees of the council. Peter, aware of this, withdrew himself from the Gentile Christians, “fearing them which were of the circumcision.” Such conduct in so eminent an apostle was not only injurious at the time, but had pernicious effects afterwards. It unsettled and misled the other Jews, even St. Paul’s companion Barnabas; and, but for the bold and no doubt providential expostulation of St. Paul, the spirit as well as the form of Christianity might have been very seriously influenced. St. Peter’s conduct greatly strengthened the prejudices of the judaizing Christians, and probably led to the idea that he had not cordially agreed in doctrine with St. Paul; an idea which was not only taken advantage of in the apostolic days, but also by some parties a century or two later; and St. Peter became in their hands the hero of an imaginary story of heretical and anti-Pauline doctrine.*

The line of the bishops of Antioch begins with Evodius; but when, or by whom, he was ordained is unknown. His successor was the far-famed Ignatius; whose letters have been, and are still, a subject of dispute. He is said to have been sent by Trajan to Rome, and to have been thrown to the wild beasts. Several of his successors are noted as writers, in Church history. The sixteenth

* *Recognitiones S. Clementis Romani.*

was Paul of Samosata, who has given occasion to this digression.

The diocese of these bishops was at this time of great extent, comprising several provinces in the East; but its exact limits can only be negatively guessed at.

*

XXV. FELIX (269—275).*

Of the Roman Church during the episcopate of Felix, nothing is known. Three spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

XXVI. EUTYCHIAN (A. D. 275—283).†

Nothing is known of this prelate. Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

XXVII. CAIUS (A. D. 283—296).‡

Nothing is known of this prelate. One spurious Isidorian letter is attributed to him.

XXVIII. MARCELLINUS (A. D. 296—308).§

Nothing is known of this prelate. Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vii. 30.

† Ibid.

† Ibid. 32.

§ Ibid.

XXIX. MARCELLUS (A. D. 308—310).

Nothing is known of this prelate. Two spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

XXX. EUSEBIUS (A. D. 310, 311).

Nothing is known of this prelate. Three spurious Isidorian letters are attributed to him.

There can be little doubt that Christianity had largely extended its borders in the latter half of the third century. Its avowed professors were to be found in every rank of society. It was no longer a bar to honourable employment either in the palace or the provinces. It is even said that the formal attention to Pagan rites was no longer demanded from Christian officials. The congregations no longer assembled in crypts and private houses to celebrate their worship. Noble churches were to be found in every city, and Christianity seemed only waiting for a public recognition, soon to undergo a wonderful change in externals.

With all these favourable appearances, however, the legal position of the Christian society had never been satisfactorily ameliorated. Edicts may now and then have been issued, to the effect, that Christians were not to be sought out, or that their accusers were to be punished; but, in the eye of the law, their society was still illegal, and its members were punishable with death on conviction;

a truth soon about to be fearfully realised. Diocletian, in the nineteenth year of his reign, A. D. 303, commenced a persecution, which is usually stated to have continued with more or less severity for ten years. The churches were ordered to be demolished, and the Scriptures to be given up and burnt. All the public officers of the empire were to be removed from their places, if Christians, except they renounced their faith; and the bishops, except they sacrificed, were to be consigned to prison, if not to death. The three last named of the Roman bishops saw this fearful time, but of their bearing in the storm there is no trustworthy account.

XXXI. MILTIADES (A. D. 311—314).

Nothing is known of this prelate, except a statement that he was appointed by the emperor Constantine a referee in the complaint of the Donatists against Cæcilian, bishop of Carthage; but I entertain a suspicion of the truth of this reference, and of its attendant synod at Arles.*

The immediate predecessors of Miltiades, suffering under imperial persecution, had little dreamed of the vision which was to gladden the eyes of their successor, and entirely change the position of the Christian society. It was during his short episcopate that Constantine entered Rome in triumph, after the defeat and death of Maxentius. The con-

* See Proofs and Illustrations, under the title of the "COUNCIL OF ARLES."

duct of the tyrant had been so intolerable, that the Romans hailed their new master as a liberator. No captive princes were driven before his chariot; his triumph was the welcome of the people.

The sincerity of Constantine's conversion has been doubted. Perhaps mortification at the fact, with its consequences, may have been the origin of some of the doubts. It is impossible to detect infallibly the workings of another's heart; but it may be truly said, that few royal personages have given such proofs of their sincerity as Constantine. His vision of the Cross is most likely a fable*; but his hearty,

* They who do not believe in the vision of the Cross may be comforted by knowing that, to all appearance, the Christians of the fourth century were saved any doubts by having been laid in their graves in utter ignorance of it; and that Jerome, the greatest *helluo librorum* of Christian antiquity, had not, A. D. 392 (that is, more than fifty years after it had been published) even heard of, much less seen, any "Life of Constantine" written by the learned and accomplished bishop of Cæsarea. This is a most extraordinary fact, if the work now extant was written by Eusebius. If the "Life of St. Martin," by Sulpicius Severus, made the fortunes of the copyists of those days, what an inquiry might have been expected after a "Life of Constantine" by Eusebius. There is a strong family resemblance in one respect between the books; there are scarcely, I should think, more untruths in one than in the other. The man of historical facts in the earlier books of the Church History, avoids them with superstitious dread in the Biography. All is dreamy haziness. If he does venture on an historical fact, the chances are that it is untrue. Indeed the writer now and then seems to have some uncomfortable feeling that his reader is doubting his veracity, or ought to do so.

The story of the Cross, ordered to be placed by Constantine on the shields of the soldiers previous to the battle, in conse-

and I may say daring, support of Christianity is no fable. It might have been well questioned in that day, whether it was his worldly policy so exclusively to support his Christian subjects. In spite of the declaration of the Christian writers, the Christian community must have been a small minority in the empire. It was so even in the cities, how much more so in the rural districts. The Christians, but lately emerged from a violent persecution, would have been firmly attached to his chariot wheels even by such a friendly toleration as would have given no great umbrage to his Heathen subjects. But Constantine's conduct went far beyond the cautious policy of a worldly ruler. It was the hearty support of a believer. His establishment of Christianity was a bold act, the effects of which, as a purely political measure, could not at the time have been clearly foreseen.

His conduct towards the Christian community must now be stated. Soon after the death of Maxentius, A. D. 312, he published edicts proclaiming freedom of worship generally, and particularly to the Christians, ordering moreover that their churches and all the property belonging to them as a body should be immediately and freely re-

quence of a dream, rests on the authority of the anonymous author of the tract, "De Mortibus Persecutorum." Because Lactantius wrote a book, "De Persecutione," which is lost, commentators, with singular propriety, attribute this tract to him. Independently of the title pointing out a distinct work, Lactantius always uses the word *Diabolus* and never *Zabulus*; while the writer of the tract always uses the word *Zabulus*, and never *Diabolus*. When the tract was written is unknown.

stored to them. Similar edicts were published in the eastern division of the empire on the defeat of Licinius, A. D. 323.

The consequences of this recognition of the Church were important. It was an old law of the Roman empire that no society or body could acquire property without a special privilege to do so. But the Christian Church had never even been acknowledged. Its possession of property, therefore, arose only from tacit connivance, and owing to this very precarious tenure it was probably extremely limited. Constantine removed all these defects. He not only recognised the Christian Church, but he published an edict at Rome, A. D. 321*, addressed to the people of the city, giving permission to every one to bequeath as much of his wealth to the Catholic Church as he might wish. This edict would no doubt largely increase the wealth of the Roman Church. All manner of property, and to any extent, and by all classes of persons, men and women, could, immediately after the passing of this law, be bestowed on the Church by the will of the dying believer; and this property was freed from the taxations to which secular property was liable.†

His behaviour to the clergy was equally favourable and liberal. He provided not only for their maintenance, but also for the undisturbed exercise of their functions. A very important part of the internal administration of the empire was conducted by the magistrates and public officers of the

* Theod. Cod. xvi. tit. ii. l. 4.

† Ibid. xi. tit. i. l. 1

various cities and towns. In each there was a governing body called the *Curia*, and its members were *Curiales* or *Decuriones*. Their duties were to administer the religious and civil affairs of the places which they respectively inhabited. Their call to this office arose either from birth, by being the son of a decurion, or from the nomination of the existing decurions in their court assembled, they being privileged to elect into their body the richer citizens or inhabitants. Out of the curials, or municipal body, was the *Flamen*, or Pagan priest, annually chosen, and out of the same body two individuals were also selected to hold the chief magistracy; one of the duties of which, a very expensive and onerous one, was to celebrate the Heathen games or shows; a duty most repugnant to the principles and feelings of Christians.

In all probability there had been Christians in every curia throughout the empire; perhaps, here and there, Christian clergy. It is very extraordinary that antiquity is silent upon their conduct in this exceedingly false position. We might have expected to find accounts of confessions and martyrdoms. When a Christian soldier, in the time of Severus, refused to wear a crown of leaves and flowers, on a day of imperial largess, his refusal is said to have led to his confession, to a prison, if not to death.* The silence may be accounted for by saying that many Christians were indifferent upon the subject, and that, when elected, they fulfilled the duties of the office, viewing the matter as

* Tertull. de Corona.

a political regulation; or, it may be thought, that they bribed the Heathen rulers, a practice, it is said, not uncommon in Africa*, where not only individuals, but churches, paid a sort of tax to the governor or his officials for toleration. Or, perhaps, it may be said, and it is probably true, that the Heathens were much more tolerant of their Christian neighbours than it is customary to imagine. Although there was at times danger in accusing, yet, as without any accuser, the religion of the Christian curials might any day have been brought to light, through their inability to comply with the requirements of the state, it seems natural to suppose, if the Christians were not placed in situations which would have exposed them to the severity of the laws, that it was owing to the tolerance of the Heathens. In times of persecution this supposition fails, and then is seen what must have been of frequent occurrence but for this tolerance.

It must have been very well known who were Christians, and probably, also (since from the beginning of the third century we read of Christian Churches), who were the church officers; and yet, so far as is known, no advantage was taken of this knowledge to promote persecution.

But, beside these offices, of which the duties were repugnant to the precepts of Christianity, there were other offices in the towns and cities exceedingly onerous and troublesome. Such was the collection of the public taxes, generally paid in kind, and the housing and dispensing of the pro-

* Tertull. de Fuga.

duce for the public service. Sometimes the persons performing these offices were the decurions; but whether they were or not, the party was nominated to the office, and could not avoid it. It must be evident, on the slightest reflection, that the execution of any of these offices was, from different causes, quite incompatible with a due exercise of the Christian ministry. Constantine, therefore, to prevent their being impeded in the discharge of their peculiar duties, A. D. 313, and again A. D. 319, freed the clergy entirely from all these services.

The emperor carried still further his consideration for the clergy. From the circumstance that the Roman state had not recognised the Christian society, it followed that no privilege had been conferred upon its ministers similar to that which the Heathen priesthood enjoyed. The taxes, therefore, had always been paid by the Christian clergy as well as laity, in obedience to the word of God, however profane or wicked might be the purposes for which they were collected. Constantine's recognition produced alterations in this respect also. Although no law of his has come down to us on this subject, we learn from Constantius, that an edict had been issued by his father, exempting the private lands of the clergy, and their tillers of the soil, from the new and additional taxation which the wants and exigencies of the times had rendered it necessary to impose, the old and accustomed tax being still due and received from them.*

* Theod. Cod. xvi. tit. ii. l. 8.

It will be seen from these instances that Constantine's support of Christianity (to say nothing of his own personal adhesion to it) went far beyond the requirements of a cautious worldly policy. Although the prejudices of his subjects might generally be in favour of Paganism, he sought to advance Christianity. He acted as one who felt it to be his duty and privilege to lead his subjects to truth ; and that, in proportion to his power, a most serious responsibility lay upon him. Apparently he sought to adjust his proceedings by the eternal balance of right and wrong, which will exist when all the fragile scales of human and worldly expediency shall have perished with their inventors. But the consequences of this position necessarily induced a change in the previous relation of the Church with the State, and in some respects in its government. This change must now be illustrated.

The earliest form of Church government may perhaps be thus described. Every congregation was connected with some bishop, and the congregations thus united with him formed the sphere of his labours, and was called a diocese. He ordained the clergy who presided over these congregations, and, with the advice probably of his clergy and laity, regulated all the ecclesiastical affairs of his community. But if any disputes arose which he could not settle, or if any complaint was made against his own character or conduct, the bishops of the neighbouring district met together in the diocese, where the dispute or complaint originated,

and having there investigated it, gave a decision, which was final.

If there be one principle of the old canon law more clearly perceptible in these early times than another, it is this — that while opinions were perhaps condemned in other dioceses as a warning to the people of those dioceses, yet no person, whether lay or clerical, if charged with any ecclesiastical offence, could be tried in any other place or diocese than the one where the offence was supposed to have been committed. A cause arising in one province, and taken out of that province by a superior authority, and examined and decided in another, and the former province bound to be governed by that decision, is without example.

Such appears to have been the Church government at the time of the accession of Constantine, when a very important change took place. Some of our pages will be occupied hereafter in a vain attempt to find a supremacy. There is no doubt now that we have found one; it is seen and felt; but it wears an imperial crown, and not a mitre.

The Church of the three first centuries had probably never contemplated any union with the state. Christians seem to have viewed themselves as something strange upon earth, and the world as something that was passing away. All they sought for in their apologies was even-handed justice, and not to be condemned merely because they were Christians. The conversion of Constantine produced union. But any view which would represent this union as an agreement between two inde-

pendent parties to certain terms and limitations for their mutual benefit, would be far from representing the true position of the Church and State at this period. On Constantine's accession to imperial power, the question of union or no union was never asked the Church. Constantine considered himself, by virtue of his office (and seems to have been considered by the Church), as the head of all his subjects, Christian and Heathen, and as the controller of all sects and parties within his dominions. If he supported one form of Christianity in preference to another, it was because he believed that the one was true and the other false; in which case, the duty he owed to God, his regard for the welfare of his subjects, and his own future responsibility, compelled him to interfere. In disputes on doctrine he sought the aid of the prelates of the Church, himself mingling in their deliberations. In disputes on matters of fact among the Churches he gave a decision, either personally or through deputies, civil or ecclesiastical; and in all cases he believed the external position of the Christian community and the conduct of its ministers to fall under his own proper care.

The Donatist controversy would supply an immediate illustration, if we could rely entirely upon all the statements which are found in the works of Optatus and Augustine. The main facts of the schism may be thus detailed:—In the fearful persecution of Diocletian, which, as has been said, commenced in the nineteenth year of his reign, A. D. 303, edicts were published, order-

ing, among other things, that the churches of the Christians should be pulled down, and their religious books burnt. On the reception of this edict in Africa, it was, as respects the sacred books, rigorously executed. They seem to have been everywhere demanded. It may, perhaps, be as well here to state, that of the Church of that country nothing is known that can be relied upon previous to this schism; and that it then comprehended the Christian congregations in the provinces of Mauritania, Numidia, and Proconsular Africa; that is to say, in the country extending from the Pillars of Hercules to the Greater Syrtes. The most important city in Africa was Carthage; it was the capital, and the residence of the proconsul; and, in little more than fifty years after this time, we are told that it contended with Constantinople for the second place, yielding only to Rome in wealth, size, and population.* It may be expected, therefore, that a large body of Christians would be assembled within its walls, and that its bishop would be the first prelate in the African Church; and this was the case. It seems, however, that there were other primates besides the Carthaginian. The provinces of Numidia and Mauritania had each their primate; not attached, however, to one see like Carthage in the province of Proconsular Africa, but the oldest prelate within them was the primate.

To return: the persecution of Diocletian spared no rank or party; laity and clergy were alike in-

* Auson. *Claræ Urbes*, 199.

volved in its effects. In Africa it made some martyrs, others confessors, others traditors, or yielders up, of their books and sacred vessels. It seems that, at the close of this persecution, Mensurius, the bishop of Carthage, died, and Cæcilian, his archdeacon, was elected in his room. An objection was, however, made to the validity of his election on several grounds; partly personal, but yet no offence of such a magnitude as would have rendered his election invalid is specified; and partly that his consecrators had given up the sacred books. The matter was in some way publicly investigated, but in what way seems doubtful.

The account of Optatus, and of Augustine in his controversial works, is, that the opponents to Cæcilian's election appealed to Constantine, asking for Gaulish bishops to investigate their charges, and that he issued a commission to three of them to meet at Rome, and with Miltiades, and some other Italian bishops, determine the differences; that they obeyed him, and decided in favour of Cæcilian; that the Donatists appealed from this decision, and the emperor summoned a large synod at Arles of Western bishops, of which the principal prelates engaged in the previous inquiry formed a part, to rehear the case; that they also obeyed, and came to the same result; and that at length the Donatists appealed to the emperor, who, having heard the parties, gave a final decision.

Of this story I hardly know what to believe. I have no faith in the two ecclesiastical decisions,

* August. Lib. de Hæres. Donatiani.

because there is so much of what is suspicious in connection with them; all that I feel authorised to state is, that there were judges appointed by Constantine, and that there was a trial, and that Cæcilian was confirmed in his see; but who tried the cause, I cannot state. The Donatists — for by that name the opponents of Cæcilian were afterwards called — were dissatisfied with the result, and elected a rival bishop of the name of Majorinus. This was the beginning of a very long schism, most injurious to the interests of the African Church, and approaching at times to a civil war.

XXXII. SILVESTER (A. D. 314—336).

Silvester ascended the Roman chair on the last day of January, A. D. 314. His episcopate lasted twenty-two years; but none of his proceedings are known, beyond his sending legates to the suspected council of Arles just mentioned, and also, it is said, to the Council of Nice, A. D. 325. But I think that statement also may be doubted; there is no evidence of it beyond the very apocryphal subscriptions, at the head of which are found the names of a Spanish bishop, Hosius, and two Roman presbyters. Their appearance in after history is only in spurious writings.* We know very little of the history of the Council of Nice; but it was probably an Eastern council, like the second general council held at Constantinople.

* See Proofs and Illustrations, under the title of "ROMAN LEGATES at the Council of NICE."

To compensate, however, for this dearth of facts, fable has not been silent; and, amongst other things, it is said that this bishop of Rome baptized the emperor; and that as Constantine held a council of 318 bishops at Nicæa, so Silvester summoned one of 284 bishops at Rome. To prevent all doubt about this Roman council, the names of all the bishops are appended. Not only were Latin bishops present but Greek also. But there is the usual unhappy forgetfulness to add the names of the sees to the respective names of the bishops, which we shall have so often to regret. Twenty rival canons were decreed also in this council, the last being a fitting crown to the whole, — “No one shall judge the first see The judge shall not be judged by Augustus, nor by all the clergy, nor by kings, nor by the people.”*

And to this canon, not only the 284 bishops with presbyters and deacons, but also Constantine, and Helena his mother, signed their names. Nay, so struck was Constantine with either Peter or Silvester, that he retired from Rome, and made a present of it to Peter and his successors, accompanying this gift with others of immense value. He also published an edict which for its theology would have done honour to Silvester himself; par-

* Cap. xx. “Nemo enim judicabit primam sedem, quoniam omnes sedes a prima sede justitiam desiderant temperari. Neque ab Augusto, neque ab omni clero, neque a regibus, neque a populo judex judicabitur.” We may smile now, but there was a time when this canon was believed to be genuine. It is one of the scaffoldings of the present Roman Church.

ticularly in respect to that first and most important doctrine of Roman faith—the supremacy of St. Peter and the Roman see. There is a clearness in it which defies all quibble. It is even prophetic. He declares the supremacy of Rome over the Churches of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and even Constantinople—a Church then unborn.

It should be added that there are also two spurious letters by another hand relating to the Nicene Council; one professing to be written by the Fathers then assembled, stating that they had translated their canons and sent them to Silvester for his confirmation, and the other containing his gracious reply and ratification.

Little is known of Constantine's proceedings relative to the Church between this time and the Council of Nicæa or Nice. One of his laws, however, ought not to be passed over in silence. The immunities which he had granted to the clergy led to consequences he had not anticipated. He heard that in many of the cities either decurions, or those who from birth, or from riches, were competent for the office, were becoming clergy; and it was suggested to him, that the object of some of them in adopting their new profession, was to escape the expensive and onerous services of the state, and that in consequence the curiæ were left in many places without sufficiently responsible members to perform the municipal duties. To guard against this, he ordered that no decurion, or person competent, or rich enough, to sustain the office, should be admitted into orders; and that any such who had been already ordained should be removed from the

clerical office and restored to the state.* The bishops seem to have submitted to this regulation without remonstrance.

Let us now pass on to the Council of Nice, which will be a clear illustration of the emperor's authority in ecclesiastical affairs.

The object for which the Council of Nice was assembled, was of corresponding importance with the magnitude of the synod. It was to determine the true doctrine of our Lord's Person—whether he was really God—the keystone of the Christian faith.

A controversy on the question had lately arisen in Egypt, between Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, and his bishop Alexander, the successor of Achillas, the successor of Peter, who had been martyred, about A. D. 311, in the Diocletian persecution. Blame is attributed to the bishop for having plunged too presumptuously into the incomprehensible mysteries of the Trinity. It was the fault, perhaps, of the school in which he had been educated. The habit of regarding the sublime doctrines of our religion as subjects of controversy and speculation, is often injurious to the delicate and reverential feeling which should always accompany us when we approach to contemplate the Divine nature.

Arius was well skilled in dialectics, and charged his bishop with introducing the tenets of Sabellius; that is, with making no distinction between

* Theod. Cod. xvi. tit. ii. l. 36.

the Persons of the Trinity; and he proceeded to refute him by the following argument:—"If the Father begat the Son, then the begotten has a beginning of existence, that is, there was a time when he had no existence, consequently he has his subsistence from what once was not; in other words, he was a creature." This was the heresy of Arius. He was not however, as we have seen, the first who had degraded the second Person of the Trinity into a creature. The tenet had already been heard of in the three great sees. Opinions of this kind had been broached at Rome, and condemned by Victor and Zephyrinus. At Alexandria, too, Origen had used language of that tendency; and at Antioch, half a century before Arius, the bishop himself had been deposed for similar doctrine. Having once professed his opinions, Arius no longer kept any terms with the Church. Not confining his speculations to synodal meetings of the clergy, he presented them to the multitude, sustained by novel arguments, and also in an attractive form; even, it is said, in songs and light compositions.

Alexander having sought in vain to arrest this evil by frequent conference with Arius, at length convened a numerous synod of Egyptian prelates, and excommunicated him and his followers. Driven from Egypt, Arius sought to propagate his opinions in the Oriental cities. Alexander wrote letters to various prelates, probably to those whose dioceses were invaded by the heretics, explaining the heresy, and warning them against any reception of its propagators. But a fire had been kindled, which was

to ravage the whole of Christendom. From causes of which we have no satisfactory intelligence, the Arian opinions became a subject of controversy throughout the East. Bishops and people all seem to have canvassed them. The greatest confusions arose. To allay the storm, Constantine was advised to summon a council, on a scale hitherto unheard of. The city of Nicæa, in Bithynia, was selected for the place of assembly, and missives were sent to the prelates, requiring their attendance by an appointed day. The emperor was obeyed with alacrity. Between two and three hundred prelates left their dioceses, and betook themselves to the means of transport which his care had provided. In the month probably of May, A.D. 325, attended by a number of their presbyters and deacons, the bishops were all assembled. Many laymen, attracted by this novel and important meeting, although uninvited, are said to have been present in the city. The discussions immediately commenced, and continued probably during some weeks. The emperor proved no silent listener, but took a part in the controversy. Arius was frequently called for, and examined respecting his opinions.

The results of this Council, the most important that the Church of Christ has ever seen, were these—

I. The first formal creed.

II. An agreement to put an end to the Quarto-deciman* usages which still existed in the East.

* There were some Churches in the East who ceased their paschal fast on the fourteenth day of the moon, on whatever day

III. The condemnation of a schism which had arisen in the province of Alexandria, through the conduct of Meletius, bishop of Lycopolis, in the Thebais, and had caused great dissensions, although they were confined to Egypt.

IV. The condemnation of Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria.

V. Twenty canons for the better government of the Church.

That the authority of the emperor was viewed by the prelates of the fourth century as overruling the canon law of the Church in its government, is clear from the proceedings of this Council. Between two and three hundred prelates, from various provinces in the East, were all summoned to meet at Nicæa, in Bithynia, to review an Alexandrian decision, and all obeyed.

But previous to the accession of Constantine, the decision of the Alexandrian Council would have been final, and no prelate of any other province could have reversed it, or canonically admitted Arius to his communion; and, even in this Council, that law was confirmed as between the Churches. This appears from the fifth canon:—

“Concerning those, whether laymen or clerks, who have been excommunicated by the bishops in each province, let the old canon law prevail,

of the week that day might fall, while the Church generally fasted till Easter Sunday. The former were called in consequence Quartodecimans. Our own British spiritual forefathers adopted the Quartodeciman usages, which shows our Oriental extraction.

namely, that those who have been cast out by one shall not be received by another. But still there may be an inquiry whether the excommunication has taken place from any littleness of mind, or contention or dislike, in the bishop. For this purpose, it is decreed that there shall be synods held twice a year in each province, that the matter may be investigated in the presence of all the bishops of the province. Thus, they who have manifestly come into collision with their bishop, will appear to all to be justly excommunicated, till by common consent it may seem good to pass a milder sentence. Let one of the two synods be held before Lent, that, every jealousy being removed, a pure offering may be presented to God; and the other about autumn."

In this canon there is an appeal from the sentence of a bishop to the bishops of the province; but no ecclesiastical appeal is given from the provincial sentence, each province being independent of its neighbour.

Before we leave the Nicene Council, and proceed with this history, it will be advisable, on several accounts, to allude to the schism of Meletius, which it condemned. The decree of the Nicene Fathers on the subject was this:—

They wrote to the Egyptian Church:—"We have decreed (as the synod has been very kindly disposed towards Meletius, although, in strictness of speech, he was deserving of no pardon), that he shall remain in his city, having no power either to ordain, or propose persons for clerical offices, or on

such a pretext to appear in the country, or in another city. He is to possess merely the name of bishop. Respecting those who have been ordained by him, we have decreed that, on their ecclesiastical position having been confirmed by a more sacred imposition of hands [by Alexander or his successors], they may be admitted to communion on these terms — they are to retain their rank and perform its duties, but in every church and diocese they are to yield precedence to those who have been ordained by our colleague Alexander; and, moreover, they are to have no power to propose any of their own party, or to suggest names, or, in short, to do any thing, except with the approbation of the bishop of the Catholic Church in communion with Alexander.

“ But if it should happen that any of the Church officers die, then it is allowed that those already admitted [Meletian clergy] should advance into the place of the deceased; that is, if he be worthy, and the people choose him, and the Bishop of Alexandria approve and give him his ecclesiastical sanction. Such is our decree respecting the persons ordained by Meletius; but as to himself, our judgment is different. On account of his irregular conduct of old date, and of the unsteadiness and rashness of his character, we allow him no such privileges, in order that no power or authority may be conferred on one so capable of again creating the same disorder.”*

* Socr. Hist. Eccl. i. 9.

With this decree of the Nicene Fathers as a guide, the inquiry into two conflicting statements may be safely and successfully undertaken.

One is the statement of Epiphanius, bishop of Constantia, in Cyprus, in what is now called his *ἀνακρίσεις*, but ought properly to be called his work on heresies. His account of the Meletians is this: — “They were a schismatic, and not an heretical body, in Egypt; holding no communion with those who lapsed in the persecution. They have now [that is, about A.D. 370] joined the Arians.”

The other, if really written by the prelate whose name it bears, would naturally carry immediate conviction along with it, and remove every doubt. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, was a very active member of the Nicene Council, which condemned Meletius. He was bishop of the country in which Meletius lived, the theatre of all his schismatical proceedings, and he was his cotemporary. His evidence will be irresistible.

He says then* (if he can be supposed to have written what now goes by his name), that “Meletius, having been convicted of many crimes, and of sacrificing in the persecution, had been, in an open synod of bishops, deposed by Peter; and that he never appealed to another synod, nor sought to defend himself, but created a schism. That his party, instead of being called Christians, were called Meletians. That they immediately began to calum-

* Apol. contr. Arian. s. 59.

ciate the Alexandrian bishops; first Peter, and then Achillas, and after him Alexander. This crafty procedure they had learned from Absalom, to retaliate the shame of their own deposition by calumniating their opponents.”*

If this account be compared with the decree of the Nicene Council, it will be found irreconcilable. The Nicene Fathers accused Meletius of disorderly conduct and rashness; terms under which apostasy in persecution could not, with any regard to the meaning of language, be included. They spoke of him also as a bishop in the exercise of his powers, and they deprived him of them, reserving to him only the name of bishop. But the Athanasian writings say he had long since been deposed from his see, and for apostasy. Again; the sentence of the Nicene Fathers, however applicable to uncanonical and disciplinal offences, was utterly at variance with the grave crime of apostasy in persecution. They say that they deprived him of his episcopal authority, that he might not repeat his offences, which otherwise, from his unsteady and insubordinate character, might be anticipated.

There can be little doubt that the account in the Athanasian writings, being opposed to every testimony we possess, and to the decree of the Nicene Fathers, is untrue; and, consequently, cannot have been the production of Athanasius, the prelate whose name it bears. I wish the reader to bear

* There is a third account (see the very learned Dr. Routh's *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. iv. p. 91.) which may contain some truth; it relates to an earlier period of the career of Meletius.

this in mind, as the question of the credibility of these Athanasian documents is of great importance to this history. On the other hand, the statement of Epiphanius has every claim on our attention. It is not only the undoubted writing of a very able and learned man, who lived in the island of Cyprus, and wrote it in the lifetime of Athanasius, with whom he may have been acquainted, but it is also consonant to the Nicene Decree.

Meletius had, it seems, adopted to some extent the opinions of Novatian, and also imitated his conduct in making ordinations; and that this was the real fact will be, I think, satisfactorily shown, by comparing the sentence on the Meletians in the synodal letter of the Nicene Council with the sentence on the Novatians in the council's sixth canon. Any difference that may occur might, perhaps, be easily explained, if the exact facts that were laid before the Nicene Fathers were known.

But the insubordinate behaviour of Meletius had produced disorder in several dioceses of the Egyptian Church. He had consecrated bishops, as well as ordained inferior clergy. To prevent generally any repetition of such proceedings, either by him or by any future schismatic, not only in the Egyptian diocese but throughout the Universal Church, the council decreed, in their fourth canon, that every bishop ought to be consecrated by all the bishops in the province. But if this should be impracticable, either from urgent necessity or from distance, then that three bishops having met together, and having the consent of the absent pre-

lates expressed by letter, might proceed to consecration. And, as a still further check upon furtive consecration, they added that the authoritative confirmation of these proceedings should be given in every province to the metropolitan.

And as this supreme authority of the Egyptian prelate within his diocese was, in the estimation of the council, both an ancient right and a necessary regulation, they confirmed it also specially by the sixth canon; and its wording strengthens the idea that the Nicene Council was exclusively Oriental: — “ Let the ancient customs which have prevailed in Egypt, and Libya, and the Pentapolis, continue; so that the Bishop of Alexandria may exercise authority throughout them, since this also is the Roman bishops’ custom. Similarly also let the privileges be preserved to the Church of Antioch, and to the rest of the provinces. Let this, however, be clearly understood; that if any one become a bishop without the assent of the metropolitan, the great synod has determined that such an one ought not to be a bishop. Should, however, two or three bishops, through private quarrel, resist the united wish of all the rest, and the wish be reasonable, and according to ecclesiastical law, let the decision of the majority prevail.”

This last canon is of special importance, as from circumstances it introduces us to a knowledge of the extent of the Roman province. It will be seen that the canon is very simple, and its meaning very clear. It confirms to metropolitans generally the powers and authority which they had previously

exercised ; and it confirms specially to the Bishop of Alexandria his authority over the Churches in Egypt, Libya, and the Pentapolis, which had been disputed or denied ; and it illustrates the sort of power by referring to a similar power exercised by the Roman prelate in his province.

As the canon places the authority of the several metropolitans on an equality, distinguishing only the locality in which they are to exercise it — and as it is a canon of the Nicene Council, a council of undisputed authority — its natural and obvious interpretation met, in the course of time, as the position of the Roman see became more exalted, and its ambition had expanded, with no favour at its hands. Accordingly, this canon has suffered every possible perversion. The advocates of that see affirm, and indeed with perfect truth, that this canon relates only to the Roman bishop's authority as metropolitan in his province, and that his universal bishopric is not alluded to. This is quite true. The council made no regulation about what had no existence. Had the Romish writers been content with these two undeniable assertions, the facts of history and the rights of their see would have been in unison ; but unfortunately ambition and party feeling have urged them on to imagine from the beginning an extent of province and an universal bishopric, to which antiquity gives no sanction.

The sixth canon does not state the limits of the provinces of Rome or Antioch, nor indeed of any

of the provinces, except those of Alexandria, the metropolitan authority within them not having been in dispute. But from a translation of this canon, made by Ruffinus in his "Church History," we can arrive at the limits of the Roman province in the beginning of the fifth century. The writers of that Church assume it to have already comprehended the whole Western Church. Such an idea is simply ludicrous, and scarcely deserving of notice. Of such little influence was the Roman see beyond Italy, that it is scarcely heard of for four centuries; a thing which would have been impossible had it possessed the authority which its advocates claim for it. From what little we know of it, and from what we know of other portions of Christendom, we should, without positive information, conjecture that the Roman province was confined within a portion of the peninsula of Italy, and our positive information confirms the conjecture. Ruffinus thus translates the canon:—"Let the ancient custom be preserved at Alexandria, and in the city of Rome; the former attending to Egypt, and the latter to the suburbicarian Churches." The words "suburbicarian Churches," in the fourth century, described the Roman province; and what those Churches were, may easily be shown. As when the African, or Spanish, or British Churches are mentioned, the reader naturally understands the Churches within these respective countries, so no difficulty will be really felt in concluding, that when Ruffinus spoke of the suburbicarian Churches, he meant the Churches

situate within the “suburbicarian regions.” These were certain provinces of Italy, having that name peculiarly appropriated to them.

The two principal cities of Italy were Rome and Milan. The latter had been, at a still earlier period, an important city; but, towards the close of the third century, it began almost to rival the capital. It was the residence of Maximian, who had been attracted by no beauty of situation, but by reasons of state policy. Nothing is known of the introduction of Christianity into Milan — neither when nor how. But, in the fourth century, the sees of Rome and Milan were quite independent, and the bishops were the chiefs of two provinces, in one or other of which all the other Churches of the peninsula were included. The cities were at this period the residence of the vicars of the prætorian prefect of Italy. The vicar who resided at Milan was called the Vicar of Italy; the vicar who resided at Rome, the Vicar of the City. Under the former’s jurisdiction were the countries Venetia, Istria, Æmilia, Liguria, Flaminia, Picenum annonarium, Alpes Cottia, Rhætia prima, and Rhætia secunda, which apparently correspond in extent with the ecclesiastical province of Milan. The countries under the jurisdiction of the latter were Campania, Tuscia, Umbria, Picenum suburbicarium, Sicilia, Apulia, Calabria, Bruttium, Lucania, Samnium, Sardinia, Corsica, and Valeria; and these latter provinces were called *urbicariæ* or *suburbicariæ*. Nothing, therefore, could be more correct or natural than to describe the Churches situate

within these regions as “suburbicarias ecclesias;” and it would never have created a moment’s dispute, but for the restriction which these words place on the extent of the Roman province, so unpalatable to the advocates of Romish claims. It is, however, too plain to be evaded, and history confirms the interpretation. There is no genuine instance, during those four centuries, of a Roman prelate exercising the authority of a superior bishop beyond these limits.*

As this is the first allusion to metropolitans, a few observations on their probable origin may be of use.

At the time when the bishops were assembled at Nicæa, the Christian Churches seem to have been grouped or grouping into provinces. There were provinces in the East; Egypt, Antioch, &c.; and there were provinces in the West; Rome, Africa,

* See some pamphlets by the Jesuit Sirmond, in the fourth volume of his collected works. They are learned, clever, and slashing; but, like the works of too many Roman controversial writers, seldom to be believed in matters of history affecting the Romish Church. He seeks to evade the conclusion of the text by the following amusing definitions, — that as the “suburbicarian regions” meant the provinces under the authority of the vicar of the city, so the suburbicarian Churches meant the Churches under the authority of the bishop of the city; which he gratuitously interprets to mean the Western Church; as if the word “suburbicarian” had no specific local meaning, but was an elastic word of varying signification, according to the authority of the city officer connected with it. Thus the city scavenger might have been called scavenger of the suburbicarian regions, and the words would then have meant that district over which his besom held sway.

&c. How they arose, there is no definite intelligence; but it may perhaps, without difficulty, be conjectured. Christianity first appeared in the cities. It was to them that the first missionaries bent their course, and from them, as from a fountain, the word of life issued to the surrounding country. In the city itself, as the Christians increased, the congregations would increase. These would require additional ministers of the orders of presbyters and deacons, which the bishops would supply. Similar ministers would be needed, also, for the suburban congregations, extending for some miles round the city. In the course of time, these latter congregations continuing to extend themselves, would be so far from the city, that the bishop could not exercise the due control. They would also be planted in smaller cities or towns. To these it would sometimes be advisable to give not merely presbyters, but bishops, so as to make them the superintendents of other groups of congregations that might be formed around those smaller towns or cities; and, as all these bishops had been sent from the Church of the chief city, it would be natural that they should regard its bishop as their chief, and seek consecration at his hands. This would be the germ of a province. Its extent would depend on circumstances: on the greater or less importance of the city, or on the extent of country geographically or politically attached to it, or on the influence of the mother Church.

Other reasons might be added as concurring to give the bishop of the chief city pre-eminence.

The original mother Churches would generally be more populous, and their members of a higher and more influential rank in society. The city itself would be the frequent resort of the Christians from the suffragan sees for secular objects ; and it would be often found the most convenient place for holding synodal meetings. It will be seen that all these circumstances would, directly or indirectly, increase the influence of the city bishop, as well as knit together the different dioceses into one province. Such seems to have been the origin of the ecclesiastical metropolitan provinces, which are beheld in the third and fourth centuries, and such the reasons which caused their very varied extent. It is found also, as a fact, that the civil metropolis was generally an ecclesiastical metropolis.

To return from this digression. Hitherto we have had to grope our way through three centuries of darkness, guided only now and then by the dim light of a name ; now we are suddenly ushered into day. We behold around us living, speaking forms, busily engaged in the affairs of life, and we imagine our pathway clear. Experience, however, soon tells us that our present position is more perplexing than our previous darkness. The light we enjoy leads only to bewilderment and confusion.

The Greek historians, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret bishop of Cyrus in Syria, wrote the histories passing under their names, if they wrote them at all, in the middle of the fifth century, and have been mainly followed for the facts of the period between the Councils of Nice and Constantinople. But either they were deficient in the necessary

requisites for the office which they had assumed, or else their works have been most seriously tampered with; or, what is not unlikely, the histories are altogether spurious.* There is abundance of information, but it is undeserving of credit. They are full of errors, as well as of doubtful and unsupported statements, and contain documents most suspicious in themselves, and inserted in the most suspicious manner. In many cases, no more is to be learned concerning a document than what is gathered from its contents. All this is deeply to be regretted, since, not only did contemporary and later heretics write treatises in the names of orthodox prelates, but other persons, whose creed was as blameless as their morals were bad (he who wilfully misleads is ever a bad man), concocted documents, the object of which will be clearly seen in the course of this history.

The result has been, I am persuaded, a change in the face of history. Not only are some matters of fact introduced which never existed, and others, probably in consequence, lost or perverted to make

* It is not an improbable conjecture that the History, which bears the name of Socrates, has been written over again, or very largely revised, by another and later hand; and the question who wrote the histories passing under the names of Sozomen and Theodoret, the latter more especially, has yet to be determined. It is an incredible composition, considered as coming from an oriental prelate of A. D. 450. But his was not an unlikely name for a Roman forger to assume, as his evidence in favour of Roman supremacy might be expected to carry immediate conviction; and it must be admitted that he gives his testimony in a remarkably clear and distinct manner.

room for them, but it is also probable that an erroneous impression has been formed of the character of many individuals who exercised an important influence in those unhappy times. The statements want the impress of truth. We feel as we read them that they are the offspring of error, prejudice, or falsehood; and that we are involved in a labyrinth from which escape seems impossible. The most inconsistent statements are made respecting the same individuals; and, judging from what we know of human nature, we are assured that all cannot be true.

It may then, perhaps, be believed, that some have been classed among heretics, whose faith was acceptable in the sight of God, but who, from the peculiar circumstances of the period, and from an objection to the controverted term, signifying "of the same substance," are found for a time acting in concert with those who were arrayed against the upholders of the Nicene Creed. When the Arians, under imperial auspices, more openly avowed their tenets and object, these men will be found their bitter opponents, heading a distinct party, some of them at last, to preserve their common faith, even giving up their prejudices, and joining with the Homoiousians. I cannot help believing that the true description of many persons would have been orthodox anti-Homoiousians. If some of them denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit, it was a later heresy. With this explanation of the cause why so little accurate knowledge is to be obtained, and of the reasons why it may be believed that erroneous

estimates of character have been formed, I proceed with such details as belong to our subject.

The reader must not feel disappointed, and complain that in a book professing to be a "History of the Church of Rome" he hears of almost every Church but the Roman. The fact is, there is no doubt about it, truth has recorded nothing of Rome's earlier centuries. Her ancestral line resembles the pedigree of some of our illustrious families, our Percies or Nevills. At first there is a succession of nameless names, with here and there an individual emerging into history. After a while these historic characters become more frequent, until at length the family is incorporated into the history of their country. So is it with the Roman Church. We have had nameless names, and shall have more; but the historic characters are beginning to appear; and, in the next century, the Roman Church will be found extending its relations, until it becomes interwoven with all the most important events of Christendom.

My object in the remainder of this portion of the volume is to mention the main facts of Church history, and to give such a representation of the other Churches as will place the reader on a vantage ground, so that, when Christian Rome, copying her Pagan prototype, sallies forth from her seven hills to commence an aggressive warfare against the liberties of the Universal Church, he may be enabled to estimate the character of her proceedings.

The effect of the Nicene Council was certainly not peace. We soon behold two parties in the East

(of the West we know nothing), headed by the most celebrated prelates of the day. On one side there was Eustathius, bishop of Antioch; Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, in Galatia; and Athanasius, bishop or presbyter of Alexandria. On the other was Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia; Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine; and Paulinus, bishop of Tyre. Eustathius charged Eusebius of Cæsarea, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, and Paulinus of Tyre, with corrupting the Nicene Creed; and, in return, Eusebius of Cæsarea charged Eustathius with Sabellianism. How far there were real grounds for any of these accusations it is impossible to say. The origin of their mutual suspicions was no doubt the sense which each supposed the other to attach to the word signifying “of the same substance.”

There is reason to believe that the admission of that word into the creed was not obtained without frequent and lengthened discussions. The friends of Arius had not been the only opponents. There were others who, entertaining no sympathy with Arian views, regarded with suspicion the word which was intended to extinguish them. Some had imagined that it supposed an anterior nature; others, that it divided the Divine nature; and others, that it made no distinction of the Divine Persons. The supposed Sabellian tendency was the most objected to. Such contradictory views of the same term are, perhaps, not incompatible with all the parties in the main holding the same tenets. They might arise from the incomprehensibility of the Creator and the

finite powers of the creature. Neither human language, nor any comparison with human things, can explain the mystery of the Triune Godhead. It is necessary to use language belonging properly to corporeal and finite natures, and to apply it to what is spiritual and infinite ; and all minds do not conceive it and apply it in the same way. The term, however, had been at length accepted. The Arians had subscribed, through fear of consequences ; and the other objectors had signed it, if not in all cases from conviction, yet at least out of respect to the majority in the Council, and also, perhaps, from an unwillingness to raise difficulties in the settlement of so fearful a controversy.

But a creed thus published was not likely to be very heartily adopted. The feelings which had overruled the objections would soon pass away, and they might again arise with increased strength and appearance of truth. In such cases, attempts would be made to explain the term, or objections would be raised to its use, which would give umbrage to its more rigid supporters ; while these, by their strong language, might raise a suspicion in the minds of the others, that they were maintaining the opinions so much dreaded.

I am aware that these observations are conjectural, but they are the best interpretation I can give of the few facts on the subject that can be relied upon relating to this period. I am extremely unwilling to believe that many of those who were ranged under the banner of Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, were unbelievers in the Divinity of our

Lord. I regard them rather as objectors to the term “of the same substance.” The facts relating to Eusebius himself, the leader of the party, are contradictions. He is said, and his removal from one royal city to another confirms the statement, to have been a very able man ; his illustrious namesake called him Eusebius the Great. He had been bishop of Berytus, in Phœnicia ; was then bishop of Nicomedia, in Bithynia ; and he died bishop of Constantinople. He is said to have been the patron of Arius, although on what grounds is uncertain ; and to have been sent into exile immediately after the Nicene Council, because he would not sign his condemnation. He is the Evil principle of the Athanasian histories ; and if a letter, and a fragment of another letter, purporting to have been written by him are genuine, he was an avowed Arian before the Nicene Council. But they are very improbable documents, and are certainly irreconcilable with the language of his namesake of Cæsarea. They seem, moreover, to be directly contradicted by the fact, that in the plenitude of his power he signed at Antioch (A.D. 341) the creed called after that city, which is an orthodox creed, omitting the words “of the same substance,” but providing, as a substitute, “the unchangeable likeness of the Godhead, substance, power, counsel, and glory of the Father.” If then he could voluntarily sign, if not propose, such a creed as that, so entirely opposed to the Arian tenets, his objection to the Nicene Creed ought to be charitably attributed to the term, “of the same substance.” But he is again

introduced as attempting to force Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, to receive Arius into communion, and to have been prevented only by the latter's sudden death.* I leave these statements to the reader's consideration, not knowing how to reconcile them; for it is evident that the Church never regarded Arius as having repudiated his early opinions, but only as having deluded the emperor by an evasive creed.

The first event of importance that occurred was the deposition of Eustathius from the see of Antioch; and it is supposed to have taken place in A. D. 330.

One of the historians states that it was the result of an Arian conspiracy, effected in the following manner:—Eusebius, of Nicomedia, having gone to the emperor, and expressed a wish to visit Jerusalem, permission and the means of transport were given to him. He set out, accompanied by Theognis, bishop of Nicæa, the city where the council had been held: their route lay through Antioch, where they were kindly and hospitably welcomed by its bishop. Passing onward to Jerusalem, they visited in their way Eusebius of Cæsarea, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, Ætius of Lydda, Theodotus of Laodicæa, and others of their party; and arranged with them the convention of a council, in which Eustathius should be deposed.† This was to be held at Antioch on their return.

* That Arius was his fellow pupil rests only on a letter of Arius—a forgery.

† Theod. Hist. Eccl. i. 21.

Such a story has nothing to recommend it. A council, however, was held, and Eustathius was deposed. Scarcely two writers agree as to the precise charges brought against him. Their nature was heresy and immorality. The latter, I think, may be discarded; and with regard to both it may be said, that his Church always revered his memory, and his deposition and exile were not effected without a dangerous tumult.* He was banished by the emperor into Thrace.

It is said that another important event occurred during the episcopate of Silvester, the deposition of Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, in Galatia, in a synod at Constantinople. He had attended the Nicene Council, and shown himself a very zealous supporter of the word, "of the same substance." The circumstances which led to his deposition are thus stated:—In Galatia lived a sophist of the name of Asterius, who, having been born a Heathen, had embraced Christianity under the teaching of Lucian, the celebrated presbyter and martyr at Antioch. Unfortunately the pupil's faith had not been so strong as his master's, and his courage had failed him at the hour of trial. He had sacrificed. What were his theological opinions it is impossible to say: this is one of the

* Athanasius is made to say, that his exile was in consequence of some insult to the emperor's mother, and that a great company of priests and deacons were sent along with him. If Athanasius had written this account, it would be true. But it is entirely unsupported. Hist. Arian. s. 5.

many cases in which the judgment is perplexed. If regard be paid to one class of extracts from his writings, his creed was orthodox ; if to another, he was an Arian.

Whatever tenets he held, however, he was an able and prolific composer of books, and used to travel about, it is said, to make them known. To one of these Marcellus replied in a work, entitled "The Subjection of Christ," containing, it is said, in the judgment of the Orientals, heretical teaching on the person of Christ, approaching to Sabellianism. This book is described by Eusebius of Cæsarea as the first composition of Marcellus, and as containing very violent attacks upon Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, Paulinus, bishop of Tyre, Narcissus, bishop of Neronias, and himself.

Basil of Ancyra, so called to distinguish him from Basil, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, is said to have been consecrated in his place.

XXXIII. MARK (A. D. 336).

Nothing is known of the Roman Church during his episcopate. There are extant, however, two spurious letters ; one from Athanasius to him, saying that the Arians had burnt his papers, and that he had lost the Nicene Canons, which were seventy in number, and begging to have a transcript of the Roman copy. This, in the other letter, is graciously conceded. The two writers

vie with each other in the strength of their expressions respecting the authority of the Church of Rome.

XXXIV. JULIUS (337—352).

Julius ascended the Roman chair on the 6th of February, A. D. 337. In the month of May following Constantine died, leaving behind him three sons. His dominions were ultimately divided among them in the following proportions. The eldest, Constantine, took Gaul, Spain, and Britain; the youngest, Constans, had Italy, Illyria, and Africa; and Constantius had Thrace, Asia, Syria, and Egypt. Such, in the main, was the disposition under their father's will. Their ages were, Constantine 21, Constantius 20, Constans 17.

It was during the episcopate of Julius that Athanasius escaped out of the East to Treves; and it is probable that by this time some other deposed prelates had sought the protection of Constans. Among them several writings, which I regard as spurious, name Marcellus. It is curious that in the genuine writings of the Latin Church at this period, he is nowhere styled a heretic. Neither Philastrius nor Augustine name him, although Augustine translated Epiphanius, by whom his heresy is described. The language of Augustine gives room for suspicion that his copy of Epiphanius did not contain

Marcellus's name or heresy, and that some mystery hangs over him.

Four spurious letters are attributed to Julius respecting Athanasius; two of them Isidorian. Another will be especially noticed in the "Proofs and Illustrations." * The Apollinarians also published under his name.† He died, A. D. 352.

The course of the history now brings to the reader's notice a prelate whose name is the most famous in Christian antiquity—Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria. He is said while deacon to have attended his bishop, Alexander, to the Nicene Council; and to have displayed so much energy and ability in the support of the word "of the same substance," as to have incurred the bitter dislike of its opponents.

On the death of Alexander, whether that event took place soon after the Nicene Council, or, as is more probable, some years later, he was raised to the bishopric by the unanimous suffrage of the clergy and people. Clear in his apprehension of truth, and firm in its maintenance, he was at one period the centre of all movements affecting the Church. At a time when scarcely a chair in Christendom was occupied with honour, when the loftiest prelates were cowering before the storm, and sooner or later betraying their Master's cause, no hesitation marked the career of Athanasius. When the tempest approached his diocese, raging with re-

* Under "COUNCIL OF SARDICA."

† Mai. Scrip. vii. 165.

doubled fury, he quietly retired before it, seeking a hiding-place in the desert. Driven from his see by three successive emperors, he retained to such a degree the affections of a populace the most turbulent and excitable in the empire, that when the emperor Valens was attempting a fourth exile, he was compelled to recal the order, and Athanasius expired at Alexandria, A. D. 373, in the midst of his people, full of years and honour, leaving behind him an immortal name.*

* It may be interesting to know the opinion entertained of him by the Pagans; for his fame extended beyond the limits of the Church, and the account which is given presents another view of the ecclesiastical statements respecting him. He is said to have carried himself too highly, and with unbecoming pride; to have been addicted to magic; and to have been charged with other offences contrary to his Christian profession.¹ It is curious that the Pagans should have had an opinion that Athanasius practised magical arts. Ecclesiastical writers explain it by saying, that his escapes from his enemies were so wonderful, he must have had more than human wit to aid him. This explanation is a mere supposition to get rid of a difficulty. The charge is curious, as the practice of magic seems to be admitted against some of the clergy of that day. The Council of Laodicea, convened in the middle of the fourth century, has express canons against it; and there is a very singular story of some Eusebius of Emesa, probably the same Eusebius to whom the see of Alexandria was offered on the first deposition of Athanasius, and who was afterwards rejected by the people of Emesa on the ground of his being an astrologer. See Augusti's notes to his edition of the works of Eusebius, p. 73, &c.

¹ Amm. Marc. xv. 7.

It is a fact in human nature, that persons who think quickly and confidently are often not able to understand, or properly to estimate, opposition to their views. Making no allowance for the different lights in which the same object may be honestly regarded, they view resistance or hesitation as a mark of obstinacy ; and the more satisfied they are of the goodness of their cause, and the purity of their motives, the less scrupulous are they of proceedings which, in the eyes of their opponents, assume more the appearance of unrighteous persecution than of righteous zeal. Such considerations may partly, perhaps, account for occurrences which seem to have taken place in Egypt soon after Athanasius's accession.

The mild and conciliatory decree of the Council of Nice, respecting the Meletians, had not united them to the Church. They still held their assemblies apart, and perhaps continued the transmission of their orders. Dissension in the orthodox Church at Alexandria among those who held the same doctrinal opinions, surrounded as it was by violent enemies, Jews, Pagans, and Arians, could not be otherwise than injurious to religion ; and the more earnestly Athanasius desired the prevalence of truth, the more deeply would he feel these divisions, and the more anxiously seek their suppression. He is said first to have tried persuasion and exhortation, but, when these failed of success, to have resorted to more energetic measures. At length it was said that, in one of his visitations, a Meletian congregation had been in-

vaded by one of his deacons, and some other persons, and a sacred vessel broken; and also that one Arsenius* had been beaten, if not murdered, by Athanasius, or some of his party; and his hand cut off for magical purposes. The hand was conveyed about in a box. Charges of this nature being carried to Constantius created great horror. They were immediately ordered to be inquired into, and a synod was convened to meet, probably at Tyre, and undertake the investigation. It is said to have been numerously attended; Eastern, Egyptian, and even some of the Eastern-European bishops being present: Athanasius and his opponents were also there. Owing to the contradictory nature of the testimony, the council commissioned six of their body, and among them two Arian bishops, Ursacius, bishop of Singidunum, and Valens, bishop of Mursa (men who, if the documents are true, enjoyed to the end of their days the agreeable privilege of being always young), to visit Egypt, the scene of the alleged complaints, and learn the truth from parties resident on the spot. This commission was not impartially chosen, and its conduct was corrupt. Such is a general statement of what is said to have taken place. How far it is true I cannot say; but the result was that Athanasius was condemned and deposed; and that he fled for his life, and was concealed in the East,

* Who this person was it is impossible to say, the accounts are so conflicting. In the Athanasian histories he is a Meletian bishop; in Rufinus, a reader of Athanasius.

from every one's knowledge, for several years. In the mean time his see was offered to Eusebius, styled of Emesa. He refused to take it; and it was accepted by Gregory, a Cappadocian, who had previously been living in Egypt on the most friendly and confidential terms with Athanasius, but who is said to have been at the bottom of all the intrigues against him.

At length Athanasius made his escape into the dominions of Constans, and reached the city of Treves. He was there hospitably received by Maximinus, the bishop. As that city was the usual residence of Constans, his case naturally, through the report of Maximinus, came under his notice. It is universally admitted that Constans was prevailed upon to interfere with his brother Constantius on the behalf of Athanasius, and that at first he was unsuccessful. He was not, however, to be repulsed; and, having entered warmly into the controversy, he plainly told his brother, that if he did not recal Athanasius, war would be the alternative. As Constans was the stronger of the two, the whole West being then, through the death of his elder brother, under his dominion, this communication was decisive, and Athanasius was recalled. If, as I believe, Athanasius was deposed at Tyre, the date of that council will be about A. D. 339, his recal would take place A. D. 346 or A. D. 347. Whether Gregory was dead, or whether he was withdrawn from Alexandria, is not certain. Such is the best account that I can furnish of the

history of Athanasius previous to the accession of Liberius.*

XXXV. LIBERIUS (A. D. 352—366).

Liberius succeeded Julius in the Roman chair at a time when the death of Constans was producing very important results.

In the beginning of the year 350 Constans had been assassinated by the command of Magnentius, and the latter had assumed the purple. In the confusion consequent upon this act of atrocity, Vetranio, a general in Illyria, was also saluted emperor. Constantius left the East to avenge his brother's murder, and possess himself of his dominions. The influence of Vetranio melted away on his approach, and the battle of Mursa confined Magnentius within the bounds of Italy. Constantius pursued his successes, and another victory over the usurper among the Cottian Alps, A. D. 353, left him sole master of the Roman empire.

In the winter of that year Constantius was at Arles. Before, however, the proceedings which took place in the Church during the episcopate of Liberius are detailed, it is necessary that as accurate a knowledge should be obtained of the objects of the chief mover, the emperor Constantius, as our means of information will supply. His cha-

* See Proofs and Illustrations, under the title "COUNCIL OF SARDICA."

racter, like that of most public men, is variously represented. In the Western Church he was execrated. He was only known to them for a few years, and as a decided opponent of the term "of the same substance," which they regarded as the only safeguard of the doctrine of our Lord's divinity. His cruel persecution of their party confirmed their hatred. But in the East, where he was more known, he seems to have been differently estimated.

The Eastern bishop, who alone has been dignified by the epithet of "the Theologian,"* in one of his orations made after the death of Constantius, thus apostrophises him, with allusion to his having advanced Julian to the empire:—"How happened it, O most divine of kings! O most devoted to Christ! (I am urged to expostulate with you as though you were present and heard me; although, being with God and sharing in that glory, and having exchanged this empire for a better, I know that you are far above any expostulation of mine;) how happened it that you, so far excelling in wisdom and prudence, not merely your cotemporaries but also your royal predecessors, could entertain such a thought?" Having attributed it to an unkind kindness that he had committed the interests of the Christian Church to Julian, and to the suggestions of an evil spirit, he expresses a fear lest his audience should think him ungrateful and severe towards

* Gregor. Nazianz. Orat. iv. 34—37.

Constantius, and he apologises by adding:—“Every one knows, even those but moderately acquainted with him, that he acted with no unkindness; and that he would, from a feeling of piety and love to us, and from a desire to confer every blessing upon the Christian community, have not only disregarded Julian, the honour of his whole family, the advancement of his empire; nay, that he would have readily sacrificed his kingdom, anything, even life itself, and nothing is dearer to secure our safety and welfare;” and, after stating that never any one had a more ardent desire than Constantius to advance Christianity, that he would rather have been instrumental in its advancement than have attained any worldly success or glory; he adds, “and if, at any time, his proceedings were grievous to us, they did not spring from contempt, or insult, or from preferring others to us, but from a desire that the whole Christian Church might be one united family.”

It is far more pleasing to believe an account of this kind, than the vulgar abuse, disgraceful only to those who uttered it, which still passes under the names of Athanasius, Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, and Lucifer, bishop of Calari; and granting that Gregory may have presented a favourable picture of Constantius in contrast to Julian, still, with every allowance, it is a distinct and positive testimony in his favour from a bishop of most undoubted orthodoxy, given two or three years after the emperor's death, when no motive of interest could influence the panegyrist, and while the wrongs

which the Church had suffered from Constantius were still fresh in remembrance.

Believing myself justified in adopting this description of Constantius, as a key to the character and object of his proceedings, however unwise I may consider some of them, and however cruel others, I will detail such as are necessary for this history. At the same time I do not vouch for the truth of all the particulars which I may mention. I have but little confidence in my documents; but the principal statements are, perhaps, true.

During the lifetime of Constans, Constantius had restrained a strong desire which he had felt of suppressing the word, "of the same substance," intending to have some substitution for it in which all parties could unite; but while Constans was the stronger of the two, and heartily supported the Nicene Creed, such a step was impracticable. He had also an equal desire to remove Athanasius from Alexandria. We have seen that his recall to his see had been against the will of his sovereign, who had only submitted to it with the alternative of war. This was a very false state of parties, and would be a source of constant irritation, especially if he believed (as he is reported to have said) that there was an understanding between his brother and Athanasius; and that it was owing to no want of effort or will on the part of Athanasius, but only through his own submission and prudent conduct, that a fraternal war had not taken place.

It may seem strange that the death of Constans itself had not, under such circumstances, been the

signal for the immediate exile or imprisonment of Athanasius; and it may have been so; I have no confidence that it was not; but if it was not, his continuance at Alexandria speaks volumes as to his influence, and the temperament of the people. When about to enter on his campaign in the West, the emperor may not have dared to leave behind him such a city, in a state of disaffection or rebellion. Indeed, there is something indicative of such a feeling in one of the Athanasian writings.

In the winter of A. D. 354, on the pacification of the West, Constantius visited Milan; and, with the aid of the court prelates, who exercised, as I have said, a pernicious influence over a mind probably very sincere, yet too uninformed, or weak and variable, to be engaged in so momentous and serious a task as the remodelling of the Church's creed, he is said to have commenced his proceedings. His first step was to be the removal of Athanasius, which was to be effected through the instrumentality of the bishops. He summoned a council, almost entirely of Western bishops, of whom three hundred are said to have attended. He demanded from them a condemnation of Athanasius; on what grounds is not clear. In a document* purporting to be an account of the interview between Constantius and Liberius, but which is beyond all doubt spurious, the charges named by the emperor

* Theod. Hist. Eccl. ii. 16. It first appears in a Greek dress about a century after the interview; and the composer sufficiently betrays himself by informing the reader that it was put to paper by pious men at the time.

are, that Athanasius had been accessory to the murder of his elder brother Constantine, and had created ill feeling against him in the mind of his younger brother Constans. But whatever the charges may have been, the bishops are said to have objected to his condemnation, on the ground that it would lead to the universal disavowal of the Nicene Creed. The emperor's real object, they said, in the removal of Athanasius, was to have a clearer stage for the introduction of his new creed, and they refused to obey. The emperor, however, insisted, and threatened them with exile. At length they all yielded, except Dionysius, bishop of Milan, the city in which the council was being held; Paulinus, bishop of Treves; Eusebius, bishop of Vercelli; and Rhodanus, a Gaulish prelate. The Roman bishop was not present, and the emperor sent for him to Milan. Liberius seems to have shown no alacrity in obeying; and, owing to his great popularity, his removal to Milan, it is said, was effected with difficulty. He was taken away from Rome by night. On his arrival at the council, promises and threats were alike powerless; Liberius refused his signature, and with the other faithful prelates he was immediately deposed and banished. His place of exile was Berœa in Thrace.

After these proceedings Constantius proceeded to put in execution the decree of the Council of Milan respecting Athanasius. Some difficulty is said to have occurred, but at length Athanasius retired from the city, and the Churches of Alex-

andria were given to George, a native of Cappadocia, an Arian, who had been elected bishop in his room.

FELIX (A. D. 357).

Felix is said to have been elected on the deposition of Liberius, and consecrated by Acacius, bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine. His doctrinal opinions are variously reported. Some report that he was himself orthodox, but, as might be expected, received into his communion persons who did not subscribe to the Nicene Creed; while he is elsewhere styled an Arian.

The only fact known relating to him during his episcopate, is the direction to him of an imperial prescript, dated the sixth day of December, A. D. 357.* The contents clearly prove his favour with the emperor, and his exertions for the temporal benefit of his clergy.†

That Felix was bishop of Rome, A. D. 357, there can be no doubt; but what had occurred previously to his election, or what occurred afterwards, is not so clear. The exile of Liberius appears in no work on which any confidence can be placed; while it appears in many works that are manifestly spurious, or manifestly corrupted. The same may be said of his recal: there is no intimation of it in any genuine writing. And it is not the least singular part of his history that

* Theod. Cod. xvi. 2. 14.

† Theod. Hist. Eccl. ii. 14.

the Roman Church, in general so remarkably jealous of the orthodoxy of its prelates, should have originally permitted such disgraceful and palpable forgeries as his letters to have contaminated his fame. Moreover, among the many writers who name these events, scarcely two agree in their statements. Some say his exile occurred after the Council of Rimini; others, immediately after the Council of Milan. Some say he was compelled to sign an Arian Creed before he could regain his see; others, that he did not: one writer cannot say whether he did or no. His return is ascribed, in one place, to a sedition of the Roman populace; in another, to the influence of the Roman ladies. The stories with respect to Felix are equally conflicting. He is stated to have been expelled from Rome before Constantius gave his assent to the recal of Liberius; and also to have been at the time in Rome. One writer states that the decree of the Council at Sirmium was, that the prelates should jointly rule the Church during their lives; and he states further that God, to prevent dishonour to the Roman Church by this disorderly arrangement, soon removed Felix from this world. Others say he retired from his office, or to another city, not saying what city, still, however, preserving the name of bishop. Another says he was ejected immediately on Liberius's return with the clergy who had joined him; while another says that he lived eight years afterwards, having with him, it would seem, a large portion of the Roman clergy; and that he was from time to time making attempts to

regain the chair, but was expelled by the people; and that he died about ten months before Liberius; and also that Damasus, the next bishop, was one of his clergy.*

One of two things is very plain, either that nothing was known, or that something was not to be told. These conflicting statements on so serious a fact relating to so important a see, are very singular; and perhaps they have effected their object,—to prevent the real truth from being ascertained. I will suggest, however, two or three views of what may possibly have been the history.

It may have been the usual story that Liberius was exiled and recalled after signing an Arian creed and receiving Arians into his communion, and that Felix either retired or was driven out of the city.

It may have been that the two prelates lived in Rome governing their respective parties; Liberius the Catholics, and Felix the Arians, to which party he probably belonged; and that, dying about the same time, successors to each were elected: and thus the strife arose which is heard of at the commencement of the episcopate of Damasus.

Or it may have been that there was no exile at

* For the authorities, see Hilar. *Fragm. ex Opere historico*; Ruffin. *Hist. Eccl.* x. 22. 27.; Soer. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 37.; Soz. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 11. 15.; Theod. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 15, 16, 17.; Philost. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 3.; Hieron. in *Chron. et in lib. de Eccl. Scriptor., or de Viris Illust.*, under the name of "Fortunatian;" Athan. *Hist. Arian.* § 41.; and the Preface to the *Libellus Precum Marcellini et Faustini*.

all (there is no authority for it of any weight), but that Liberius died somewhere between A. D. 353 and 357; and Felix was elected and consecrated bishop of Rome by the Arians.

Or it may have been that there was an exile but no return. Either he was never recalled or had died, or the chair being full there was no room for him; and that, in both these last cases, Felix lived and died bishop of Rome, as Auxentius lived and died bishop of Milan.

The recal of Liberius being said to be early in A. D. 358, countenances the idea that we have no true facts. He could not be restored previous to the date of the rescript directed to Felix, which was late in A. D. 357. But he is said to have been restored immediately after, which looks like management.

There is nothing to overthrow any of the suppositions I have been making; each and all are as likely to be true, so far as facts are concerned, as any others that may be imagined. There is a perfect blank in the history of the Roman Church for these eight years*: no one then or after alludes to this painful history of Liberius. And that something was wrong may be suspected from our ignorance of the proceedings of the Roman bishop in the Council of Rimini.

The historians, when describing the Eastern Council, can tell us of the orthodox prelates, who

* See Proofs and Illustrations, under the title, "COUNCIL OF LAMPSACUS."

the leaders were, and what they said; but of the leading Western prelates at Rimini not a particle of information is given. The council was held in Italy, and yet nothing is known of the Roman bishop. I own that this silence leads me to suspect that the records of this period have been withdrawn, or tampered with, and that something worse even than the exile—an exile so managed that he was always bishop of Rome, and a lapse immediately recovered from—was behind, namely, an Arian bishop in direct succession.* Damasus, the next bishop, is said, in one of the spurious documents, to have been one of his clergy.

If the reader will now take a survey of the Church as it appeared in the year 359, he will find all the principal sees occupied by Arians, or by bishops who had rejected the word, “of the same substance.” There was Saturninus at Arles, in Gaul. In Italy, there were the bishops of Rome, Milan, and Aquileia. Between Italy and the Hellespont, there were Germinius at Sirmium, Macedonius at Constantinople, and George at Alexandria. There were the bishops of Jerusalem and Cæsarea, in Palestine; Eudoxius at Antioch, and Basil at Ancyra; beside many very influential prelates, occupying less noted sees, all of whom were rejecting the word, “of the same substance.” In all probability the Nicene Creed was not publicly recited in any of these Churches. At the same time, it is

* If he was an Arian, it must have been to him a piece of unexpected fortune to have been canonised in the sixteenth century.

supposed there were a large number of bishops of inferior note, particularly in the West, who maintained this creed in its purity; and many in the East held the same doctrine, under the term, “of like substance;” although, on metaphysical grounds, they rejected the term, “of the same substance.”

The emperor seemed now to have paved the way for accomplishing his long-desired project, the formation of a creed that should be expressed in language offensive to no portion of the Church. A truly princely object, if the truth was expressed and preserved, and one deserving of all commendation. It must be borne in mind, in vindication of Constantius, that the creed of the Council of Nice was not, in his days, invested with those prescriptive claims to reverence which it now presents. It had only seen a generation, and its principal term had met with great opposition from different parties in the East. Moreover, to confirm the propriety of the opposition, it had been seen, or imagined, that some who had most strongly urged the term on the council had concealed under it the heresy of Sabellius. To this must be added, that there was a third party constantly with him, the court party, having great influence over him, who, concealing their real opinion of the dissimilarity of the Son to the Father, sought to promulgate their own views, by persuading him that the word “substance” ought in no case to be used of the Deity; and that it was owing to that word and its compounds that all the confusions in the Churches had arisen. In place of them, they seem to have

suggested that a creed, expressing a resemblance of the Son to the Father, without using the term substance, should be composed and subscribed; and to have stated that this language, while it would embrace every opinion, would be justly objectionable to no party. A loose formula of this nature recommended itself to his approbation, and it was determined to summon the bishops of the Churches, and to urge it on their approval with all the force of imperial influence. There were still great difficulties to contend with; but it was hoped that if the council was divided into two parts, as two smaller bodies would be more manageable than one large one, success would attend their efforts. It was ultimately determined that the Western bishops should meet at Rimini, and the Eastern at Seleucia, in Isauria. The emperor accordingly sent letters to the various prelates to that effect; they were told that the primary object of their convention was to allay the discordant opinions on the faith which prevailed; and it was directed that, after they had consulted together, each council should send ten of its members to the emperor, to give the result of its deliberations. The proceedings of the bishops who assembled at Rimini must be first related.

More than four hundred were present; and among them of the court party were Valens and Ursacius, bishops of Mursa and Singidunum; Germinius, bishop of Sirmium; Auxentius, bishop of Milan; Demophilus, bishop of Berœa; and Caius from Illyria. After the forming of the synod, and the usual recital of the emperor's letter, pointing out

the objects of their convention, the proceedings commenced. It is said, that when the creed was taken into consideration, much discussion arose; one prelate suggesting one plan, and another another, for putting an end to the controversies. At length Valens and Ursacius proposed a very sweeping one. They held in their hands a creed which had been agreed to at Sirmium. They proposed that all previous creeds should be abrogated, and this one adopted. It was immediately read. Its teaching respecting the Son of God was, that "He resembled the Father according to the Scriptures," or that "He resembled Him who had begotten Him in all things according to the Scriptures;" no mention being made of the word "substance," a word which, they said, ought not to be used of the Deity. Their creed, they urged, had met with the approbation of the emperor. The council ought to adopt it, and thenceforth not curiously investigate each other's opinions. If more exact definitions were introduced, they would lead to curious criticisms, and union would be impossible. They affirmed that it was far preferable to think exactly and profess loosely, than to introduce novel names, which only led to dialectic subtleties. As to the word, "of the same substance," they condemned it as being unknown to the sacred writings, and misunderstood by the multitude; and, in conclusion, they recommended the expression, that "the Son was like to the Father, according to the Scriptures." Such is said to have been the substance of their arguments on the introduction of their creed.

After it had been read, the great majority of the council arose, and asserted that they wanted no new creed. They were, they said, satisfied with the old one; that they had met together to prevent the introduction of novelties; and that, if really no novelty was intended by this new profession of faith, let its professors anathematise the dogma of Arius, the cause of all the tumults in the Churches. This last proposal the Arians naturally declined, and the council was immediately separated into two parties. The majority, the maintainers of the word, "of the same substance," then ordered some heretical creeds to be recited, and also the Nicene Creed. The former they condemned, and the latter they confirmed, and forbade, for the future, any alteration of it, and they concluded by deposing the principal Arian leaders. They are then said to have written to the emperor, giving him an account of what had passed, and requesting his confirmation of their proceedings. This letter was, according to the emperor's command, conveyed to him by ten of their number.

But Valens and Ursacius, immediately on their deposition, had hurried off to court; and, arriving before the legates of the council, had prejudiced the emperor's mind, telling him of the treatment they had received for recommending the adoption of a creed that had been approved by himself. When, therefore, the legates sent notice of their arrival, he would not receive them, professing that he was too much occupied with cares of state. There is a correspondence extant purporting to

have taken place between Constantine and the two divisions of the council; but it may be questioned whether any one of the documents is genuine. The history of the after proceedings is very obscure; indeed it is very contradictory. The prevailing opinion is, that the legates were first cajoled into a signature of the creed proposed at Rimini by Valens and the Arian party, and then that they returned with it to the council, and that the latter were at first exceedingly indignant and refused subscription, but were finally, from various causes and arguments, prevailed upon to yield.

Our attention must now be turned to the East. It is said that about one hundred and fifty bishops had assembled at Seleucia, the place of meeting for the Orientals, towards the end of September, A.D. 359. The great majority were Antihomousians, and of the party whose chief leader was Basil, bishop of Ancyra. The leader of the Arians was Acacius, bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine. It is unnecessary to detail the proceedings of the council. It is enough to say, that the Antihomousians adopted the creed of Antioch; which, without using the word, “of the same substance,” had a satisfactory equivalent — “the unchangeable image of the Godhead, substance, power, and glory of the Father;” while the Acacians, pretending that they did not object to that creed, observed that the word, “of the same substance,” and “like in substance,” as well as “unlike,” having caused great disturbances in the Church,

they rejected them altogether as foreign to the Scriptures. The last indeed they anathematised, and all who held the tenet. They added that the expression which they approved was that the Son was "like the Father," as the Apostle had used the expression, "who is the image of the invisible God." This, it will be observed, was the formula which had been adopted at Rimini; and there can be but little doubt that it had been previously determined upon by the emperor and the court leaders of the two councils. But it is said that the Acacians in the council openly limited this resemblance to the will only, and did not believe that it extended to the substance, which latter was the opinion of all the other bishops present. Four days were spent in altercation. At length the Count dissolved the synod. The Anti-homousians concluded their sitting by deposing the leading Acacians, and sent ten of their number to Constantius, to give an account of their proceedings, and confer with the delegates from the council that was sitting at Rimini.

The deposed Arians acted like Valens and Ursacius at Rimini. They arrived first at court, and, with the assistance of Valens and others, employed their advantage in prejudicing the mind of the emperor against their opponents, as he had been previously prejudiced against the Western legates. Much manœuvring is said to have ensued. The result was, that the Eastern legates, partly by management, and partly through fear, were prevailed upon to follow the example of the

Council at Rimini, and to sign the same creed. It will thus be seen that, while both the great divisions of the Church were mainly orthodox in their creed, the one having adopted the Nicene, and the other the Creed of Antioch, yet that, partly by cajolery and partly by fear, they were induced to sign a profession of faith which had no distinctive marks, and admitted every shade of opinion except that which declared positively that the Son was like the Father in nothing. This creed was again confirmed in a council held at Constantinople in the following year, and it was ordered to be presented for subscription to every bishop, with no other alternative but exile in case of his refusing to sign. It is said, to the shame of the prelates, that the exiles were but few. The creed was almost universally signed.*

An apparent union now existed throughout the Universal Church, and the emperor's great object seemed to be attained. The conduct of the Western prelates in these proceedings is, if true, in every view most painful to contemplate. Their behaviour was far more disgraceful than that of the Orientals. The Nicene Creed had never universally taken deep root in the East. It had been excepted against from the beginning, and different formulas had been proposed, and adopted by way of substitution. The result had been, for a series of years, scenes of great violence and party feeling. They might consequently have had some excuse

* Sozom. Hist. Eccl. iv. 20. 22.

for agreeing to a new formula, especially one of peace, which, while it admitted persons to their communion whose tenets they abhorred, still enabled them to maintain their own opinions. But there was no such excuse for the Western Churches. The Nicene Creed was among them the shibboleth of truth ; and yet, at the first order of the emperor, the bishops, with a few honourable exceptions, cast it aside, and received Arian communion.

This, I again say, if true, for I would willingly disbelieve it, is perhaps one of the most humiliating pages of the Church's history. Had the Western Churches been afflicted with Arian emperors like the Oriental, humanly speaking, the gates of hell would have had a speedy victory.

It is only by dwelling upon this scene of almost universal darkness and defection, that we are able to estimate the value of Athanasius to the Church. The Egyptian pillar was unbroken and erect.

But how vain a creature is man ! Shortly after the apparent accomplishment of all his wishes, Constantius died. He never saw the fruits of his labours. Death seized upon him at the age of forty-five, at Mopsocrene, on the confines of Cilicia and Cappadocia, on the 3rd of November, A. D. 361. He was on his way to oppose Julian, who had been lately saluted emperor. On his death the Roman empire devolved on the latter, who was then thirty years of age.

Julian had been educated in Christianity, but had afterwards declined towards Polytheism. His

character is one of the most singular on record. Learned, witty, clever, and brave, the master of the Roman empire, he seems neither to have excited fear, nor inspired love. The imperial dignity was lessened in his person, and he was despised by his subjects. Among his first acts was the recal of the exiled prelates. It is stated that, at this time, a council was held at Alexandria, to consider the state of the Church; but whether it was purely an Egyptian council, or whether any prelates from a distance attended it, or even whether there was any council at all, I feel unable to say. There are so many forgeries connected with it, that its very existence is doubtful. But, supposing there was a council, it is said the main question agitated was, how were the bishops to be treated who had communicated with the Arians? and that the opinion of Athanasius was, that all should be received, who, after abjuring the Arian tenets, should sign the Nicene Creed. This may have been the case, and this may have been the decree of an Egyptian council, and may have suited the circumstances of Egypt, where probably there had been many prelates who had followed their bishop into exile. But we never read of any effects of this decree on the Universal Church. No councils are held in consequence of it to legalise the tenure of the sees. All passes smoothly along as if, when the pressure was removed, the prelates in possession had quietly resumed the creed they preferred. No Arian is deposed. Auxentius sits quietly at Milan two years before

Valentinian's arrival. What became of the confessor Dionysius, the orthodox prelate of that see, is unknown.* Perhaps Felix also was sitting at Rome. Nothing is known of Liberius. And if this council and its decree be reflected upon, it will be thought rather strange that a dozen prelates, only one of whom was bishop of an important see, should legislate for thousands, among whom were the tenants of all the great sees in Christendom. The thousands would more probably legislate for themselves. For these reasons I have no confidence in the existence of this council beyond its possibly having been an Egyptian council.

Many spurious letters are attributed to Liberius which are not taken from the Isidorian Collection; they are to be found among the fragments of the historical work of Hilary, and will be noticed in the "Proofs and Illustrations," under the title, COUNCIL OF SARDICA.

XXXVI. DAMASUS (A.D. 366—384).

The election of a successor to Liberius was the occasion of much tumult and bloodshed at Rome. There were two rival candidates, Damasus and Ursinus, or Ursicinus. The disturbances were so

* Trithemius is quoted by Ughelli as saying, Dionysius died in exile in Cappadocia, A.D. 374. This would never do. Therefore the learned Jesuit Papebroch murders him before the recall of the exiles.

serious, that even the Heathen historian has recorded them.

“Damasus and Ursinus,” he wrote, “burning with a zeal scarcely human, contended for the bishopric with a great loss of life to their partizans. Juventius (the city prefect), unable either to restrain or allay the conflict, was compelled to retire into the suburbs. Damasus was the conqueror, his party being at hand in the fight. It is stated that there were found in one day, in the church of Sicininus, a hundred and thirty-seven dead bodies; and the populace were excited to such a degree, that it was with difficulty they could be appeased. And I would not deny,” he adds, “considering the glory connected with the city, that they who are desirous of this office should strive in every way in their power to attain it, since they who have once won it are secure for the future. They are enriched with the gifts of the matrons; they appear abroad in carriages; they are well clothed, and live so luxuriously, that their feasts exceed royal entertainments in profuseness.” *

The merits of the cases of the respective competitors it is difficult to arrive at; and as they are not important to this history, they will not be discussed. Damasus, who is said to have been one of the clergy of Felix, was, in the language of the historian, the conqueror.

There is scarcely an event in the episcopate of

* Amm. Marc. xxvii. 2.

Damasus on which any reliance can be placed. It is said that he held a council at Rome somewhere about A. D. 376 or 377, in which the doctrines of Apollinaris were condemned; but I doubt it.

Several spurious documents, which are connected with him, are mentioned in some of the "Proofs and Illustrations," and there are others not worth noticing. He died A. D. 384.

The twenty years which followed the return of the exiled prelates, A. D. 362, were a time of peace for the Western Churches. Julian paid no attention to them, and Jovian's reign was no sooner begun than terminated. He was, besides, favourable to the Catholic party. His successor in the West was Valentinian, a man utterly indifferent as to the creed of those around him. Although a professor of the Nicene Creed, he married an Arian; and maintained Auxentius (described as a most noted Arian) in the important see of his imperial city of Milan.* He maintained, also, the Pagan rites. The altar of victory at Rome, which had been overturned by Constantius and restored by Julian, he allowed to remain undisturbed.† His son and successor, Gratian, a youth apparently of great promise, also adopted the Nicene Creed; and as he resigned himself in a great measure to the spiritual guidance of Ambrose, the celebrated

* See Proofs and Illustrations, under the title, "AUXENTIUS."

† Relat. Symmach. 3.

bishop of Milan, nothing seriously hurtful to the faith occurred while he held the imperial sceptre.*

Far different, however, was it in the East. There the orthodox Churches were suffering all the ills of the severest persecutions, and not at the hands of Pagans. Their martyrs had not the honour of a martyrdom, for the blow was struck by professors of the same faith with themselves.

It will have been seen that thus far in this century nothing is known of any active proceedings of the Roman Church out of its own immediate province; and that its connection with the Oriental Churches arose accidentally from the persecutions of the Anti-Nicene emperors, compelling the Eastern prelates to seek shelter in the West. As this is also a true representation of the Roman Church to the end of this volume, it appears to be most advisable to continue offering some further Oriental details which are necessary to the elucidation of future events.

The Church of Antioch will first require notice. It has been stated that, A. D. 331, Eustathius had been deposed. After this several bishops successively filled his episcopal chair. As there can be little doubt that the Nicene Creed was used during the reign of Constantine, the orthodox members of the Church remained in communion with those prelates; and when, afterwards, the Creed of Antioch was substituted, it would not of itself, nor did it, cause a separation. Even under the later

* See Proofs and Illustrations, under the title, "RESCRIPT OF GRATIAN and VALENTINIAN II."

prelates, as Eudoxius, of the orthodoxy of whose opinions no favourable idea can be entertained, yet as probably the Arianism did not appear in the services, the orthodox members are said not to have left the Churches. They were, however, specially watched over, and, among others, by Flavian, who was appointed to the see on the death of Meletius at the Council of Constantinople.

In the year 361, on the translation of the bishop Eudoxius to the see of Constantinople, Meletius was consecrated in his room. He is said to have been at that time bishop of some other see, and also the choice of both Arians and Catholics. I believe these to be later inventions. In the emperor's absence, the orthodox party had probably sufficient influence to place him on the episcopal throne; but as Meletius proved to be not only orthodox, but a supporter of the term, "of the same substance," an unpardonable offence in the eyes of the emperor; and as his piety and virtues made a signal impression upon the people, the court party prevailed upon Constantius to remove him from the see, and he was banished to Melitene, in Armenia.* The chair was then given to Euzoius, an Arian. The effect of this step was serious. The orthodox party were so hurt that they retired from the churches. Hitherto they had continued to attend, partly from the hope of some day welcoming a prelate more in accordance with their views, and partly to avoid schisms;

* See Proofs, &c., under "PAULINUS and VITALIE."

but, on the exile of Meletius, their hopes were crushed and their patience exhausted. They retired and held their assemblies apart.

Constantius died soon after these transactions. Julian having, on his accession, given permission to the exiled prelates to return to their sees, Meletius returned to Antioch. There were, therefore, two resident prelates; Euzoius presided over the Arians, and Meletius over the Catholics.

The accession of Jovian, A. D. 363, raised the hopes of the various parties. Meletius immediately held a council at Antioch, which subscribed the Nicene Creed, and presented it to the emperor. The Anti-homoeousian party, who subscribed the Creed of Antioch at Seleucia, headed by Basil, the deposed bishop of Ancyra, are said to have written to the emperor, praying that he would confirm that creed, or the Nicene; or, if not, that he would summon an œcumenical council. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, also, came to Antioch, and was most cordially greeted by the emperor; and when attempts were made by the Arians to prejudice him in the emperor's opinion, they were silenced with threatenings.* But this time of hope and expectation soon passed away. Jovian was succeeded by Valens, an Arian, whose approach to Antioch was the signal for the exile of its prelate Meletius, and a persecution of the Catholics, which continued till the last few months of his reign.

* Sozom. Hist. Eccl. vi. 45.

If we turn to the Alexandrian Church, we shall find that, on the accession of Damasus, Athanasius was at Alexandria. He remained there undisturbed until his death, in A. D. 373. The emperor Valens, it is true, gave an order that all the prelates who had been exiled by Constantius, and had returned under Julian, should be again expelled from their sees; and an attempt was made to execute it at Alexandria, but it was found advisable to desist. It would have created a civil commotion. His death, however, was the signal of discord. The Arians and Catholics immediately elected each their bishop; if indeed Lucius, the Arian prelate, had not been already consecrated in the lifetime of Athanasius. Peter was chosen by the Catholics. But the mantle of Athanasius had not fallen on his shoulders. His election was immediately followed by a violent persecution, of a most atrocious kind, cruel and disgraceful, which sent him into exile. He found a shelter at Rome, in the dominions of Valentinian, where he remained, until the political troubles which harassed Valens in the last years of his life induced him, at Antioch, to issue an edict for the recal of the exiled bishops.*

But it was, perhaps, in Asia Minor that the greatest confusions prevailed. That populous district, abounding in Churches, was, from one end to the other, one battle-field. Bishops were armed against bishops, people against people, the emperor

* Hieron. Chron.

supporting the cause of heresy. Every where were seen exiles, confiscations, and marks of ignominy. The congregations—nay, even whole cities—had to convert the deserts into places of prayer and worship, exposed to the varying elements, and even then they were not secure. A violent tempest was raging, which involved the Church in its darkness; so that, to add to the confusion, they could scarcely distinguish friend from foe. In the Cappadocian diocese alone was there comparative safety, the emperor having retired before the courage and virtues of its bishop.

Such was the state of the East between A. D. 373 and 378; and, with an Arian emperor, there seemed no likelihood of change; but, as has been observed, “man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.” Valentinian having died A. D. 375, Valens became placed in a situation for which nature had not fitted him. The two boys, Gratian and Valentinian II., could not occupy the place of their father; and the inroads of the Barbarians on the imperial territory became more frequent and devastating. Before his last campaign, A. D. 378, Valens was at Antioch, and from political motives issued the order above-mentioned, for the return of the exiled prelates.

With this decree, followed by his death in the same year, commenced the decline of Arianism. It had only been supported by secular authority; it had never gained much influence among the people; and, when the imperial support failed it, it gradually disappeared.

The return of the exiles was the return of all

the prelates to the people, not yet, however, to the buildings from which they had been driven. The congregations assembled no longer in secret places, exposed to the elements, but within the walls of their cities. The severity of the previous persecution increased the reaction, and the face of the East was soon entirely changed. Peter returned from Rome to Alexandria, and it would seem also to the Churches, as Lucius is next heard of at Constantinople, before Demophilus had left that city; and Meletius returned to Antioch. His first acts that we are acquainted with were the appointment of bishops in various cities of the East. As soon as was possible, he assembled a council at Antioch. Its acts are lost; but, no doubt, its unity and prudent decisions would give a strength to the Oriental Church which it had not possessed for half a century. The Church of Antioch could again take its own place in the East; and its bishop is said, two years afterwards, to have presided over what is now termed the second general Council of Christendom.

Still more important changes were taking place in the world. The emperor Gratian, then but twenty years of age, having been practically left master of the Roman empire, found himself unable to meet the duties required of him. The Barbarians, elated with their victory, were spread over Illyricum and the adjoining countries; and his young and feeble arm was unable to repel them. He resolved to select a partner in the empire. His choice fell upon a Spaniard named

Theodosius, the son of a brave officer of the same name, who having overcome the Moorish prince Firmus, an African, and a revolter against Valentinian, had only five years previously to his son's election been executed at Carthage, out of jealousy, it is said, of his superior virtues and successes. Invested with his new honours and authority, Theodosius immediately proceeded to Thessalonica. His skilful and successful conduct, however, is not the subject of this history, but rather his ecclesiastical proceedings.

His residence at Thessalonica introduced him to Ascholius, one of the distinguished prelates of the day. The ecclesiastical history of the Churches of Macedonia is a blank from the days of St. Paul. In the fourth century, the bishop of the apostolic Church of Thessalonica seems to have been their chief. Theodosius is said to have received baptism at his hands, and he is also said to have immediately sealed his sincerity by publishing, in February, A.D. 380, an edict, directed to the Church of Constantinople, stating that it was his desire that all his subjects should adopt the religion which St. Peter had taught the Romans; namely, that which Damasus the Roman bishop and Peter the bishop of Alexandria professed, and added to make it still more clear what he meant (so little must he have deemed the Orientals to know of the faith of either Peter the Apostle, his namesake of Alexandria, or Damasus of Rome), that it was the Homousian faith. He declared also, in the same edict, that all those of the Chris-

tian religion who did not comply with his wishes would be deemed infamous, their assemblies should not be called Churches, and over and above the divine displeasure he threatened them with his own.*

It is now time to pay particular attention to

* Theod. Cod. xvi. t. i. l. 2. If we reflect upon the peculiar wording of this law, it has a most suspicious air; and there are political grounds for doubting its genuineness. It must be remembered that the emperor had only recently been nominated, and the feelings of his subjects towards him were as yet unknown. It was hardly to be expected that at such a time any man of common sense would issue an edict insulting every Oriental religionist, let his opinions have been what they might. If this law be regarded as directed against the heretics, it made them directly his enemies, and yet it was a mere empty sound. Their persons were stigmatised with infamy, their assemblies were not to be called churches, and yet, with singular inconsistency, they were left for a year afterwards in the undisturbed possession of the churches, while the Catholics were confined to private chambers. And if it be looked at as the Catholics would regard it, it was an insult. To refer them to a Western bishop for their creed was an insult. It is, therefore, not without ground that this law—particularly when its peculiar phraseology about Peter, which was not the language of the 4th century even among ecclesiastics, is considered—may be regarded as spurious; and that we look upon the edict of the 30th July in the next year, immediately after the Council of Constantinople, as the first genuine edict. By that time his elevation to the empire was established, and the Barbarians were subdued. He then acted like an emperor; he did not issue a *brutum fulmen*; he ordered that all the churches should be given up to the Catholics, and the heretics expelled; and named the letters, not of a Western or Egyptian bishop, as tests of orthodoxy, but bishops of his own dominions, bishops in every province of the East.

the see of Constantinople, henceforward destined to assume so important a place among the Churches of Christendom. Its bishop, from having been an unknown suffragan in an almost unknown province, on the shores of the Hellespont, had in fifty years, by the transfer of the court to Constantinople, become one of the most powerful Greek prelates. And yet neither peace nor truth had accompanied him in his wonderful career. Like the prelate of old Rome, his influence was the influence of his city. For forty years before this time the Church had been the scene of fearful disorders, in the hands of bishops more or less attached to the Arian party. Its present bishop was Demophilus, a decided opponent of the Nicene language, and most probably of the Nicene Creed. The Nicene Christians, as far as they could be judged by appearance, were so few in numbers, that they scarcely deserved the name of a flock, not even of a remnant. Being without a bishop, they were, to use the language of their future instructor, as sheep without a shepherd, unpastured, unheeded, wandering here and there on the mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth. A worse than Egyptian darkness brooded over the city.

The attention of the Oriental prelates had been attracted by such painful representations even in the lifetime of Valens; and on his death they immediately applied a remedy.

Gregory, of Nazianzum, is said to have been consecrated bishop of an obscure place called

Sasima, by Basil, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia. On the division of Cappadocia under Valens, Basil had lost half his province; the bishop of the principal city in the other division having claimed the supremacy over the other Churches within it. The glory of Basil's see was diminished, and he resolved to redeem it as much as possible by creating additional suffragans. Among other places in which he determined to place a bishop was Sasima, a town in Cappadocia; and to this see, much against his will, was Gregory sent. But he could not be prevailed upon to stay. The place was uncongenial to a man of his highly cultivated mind; and, after a short trial of it, he fled, and could never be induced to return. He sought retirement, and that undisturbed contemplation in which he delighted. By the entreaties of his aged parents, however, he returned to Nazianzum, and, as long as his father lived, acted as his coadjutor in that city.

Such was the individual requested by the Oriental prelates to revive the dying embers of orthodoxy at Constantinople. He went there A.D. 379, and his labours were most successful. At first he preached in a small building, the Arians being in possession of the churches. He was received with scoffs and ignominy, but by his meek behaviour, by his patience and gentleness, as well as by his expressive eloquence, not only were the orthodox called forth and their spirits revived, but the Arians also were irresistibly drawn within his circle. One after another cast

away their hostile feelings, and bowed their hearts and knees at the name of the Son of God.

If any faith could be placed in the "*Carmen de Vita sua*," generally attributed to Gregory, much information, most graphically told, might be given of occurrences at this period; but it is better to admit ignorance than to perpetuate falsehood.

At the close of A.D. 380, Theodosius having defeated and expelled the Barbarians, entered Constantinople. His arrival was the knell of the Arian cause. The churches were immediately transferred to the Catholics, and the Arian bishop Demophilus and his party retired beyond the walls to hold their religious assemblies.

Whether Gregory was ever consecrated bishop of Constantinople may be a question; and yet I think the evidence, on the whole, to be against an affirmative conclusion. The story that he was consecrated by the council seems quite untenable. His valedictory address repudiates such an idea. The reasons which he gives to the council for retirement could not have been the fruit of a few days' experience of his office. His pure and unworldly soul felt no interest in the vulgar struggles for place; they would have brought him down from heaven to earth. Although he had been the sport of insult and injury in his day of small things, in his day of power he had no taste for revenge. He had no sympathy for worldly pomp. His people, therefore, never saw him richly clad in a stately equipage; and having nothing to seek from imperial favour, he was never an attendant

on the imperial ministers. He gave no satisfaction to the men of this world; and, besides, age and infirmities had placed their mark upon him. Whatever, therefore, was his position at Constantinople (whether he had been or was about to be consecrated), he begged to resign his charge into the hands of the assembled prelates.

This was no common man, nor was this a common act. It was not a mere laying down or refusal of episcopal dignity, even although the chair was the chair of the chief city of the Oriental empire, and he was not insensible to that charm, nor to the lovely scenes which he was to quit for ever; but it was the relinquishment of the spiritual children which God had given to him, which, from having been once a handful, were become a nation, and he was a tender and most affectionate parent.

His resignation was accepted, and instead of having the most perfect theologian of the day, the Church received for its bishop a man, it is said, not in orders, not even baptized. His name was Nectarius.

Summonses had already been issued, A.D. 380, for an assembly of the Oriental bishops at Constantinople in the following year. The council commenced its sittings in May, 381, and continued them for two months. It is said that there were present, Meletius, bishop of Antioch, Timothy, successor of Peter, bishop of Alexandria, Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, and Ascholius, bishop of Thessalonica. There were also present thirty-six bishops of the

sect of the Macedonians, who regarded the Holy Spirit as a creature. The reason of their being summoned was to induce them to join the Catholics, but all efforts were unavailing.

The primary object of the prelates assembled in this council was to agree upon a profession of faith, and thus put an end to doctrinal confusions in the East. With this view they adopted the Nicene, with some additions; the same (if we add the expression of the procession of the Holy Spirit "from the Son") as is used in the Communion Service of the Church of England.

They anathematised the following heresies:—the Eunomians, or those who said that the Son was unlike the Father.

The Arians, called also the Eudoxians.

The Semi-Arians, or those who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

The Sabellians, the Marcellians, the Photinians, and the Apollinarians.

After all their labours were completed, the bishops prayed the emperor's confirmation of their proceedings, which was, no doubt, given; and they retired to their sees.

The emperor then issued the edict already mentioned, for the transfer of the Churches into the hands of the Catholics, in which also he named those prelates whose letters of communion would be regarded as evidence of Catholicity. They were all Orientals, without any reference to either Peter or Damasus. It is dated July 30. A.D. 381.

A very significant rescript, of which the fol-

lowing is the substance, was sent by Valentinian I. to Damasus, with orders that it should be read in all the churches in Rome.* It is dated July 30. A. D. 370.

“Ecclesiastics, or those who profess continency, are not allowed to enter the dwellings of widows or young women under age. Let them be punished if the women’s relations bring an accusation against them. We decree also that none of these parties shall benefit, directly or indirectly, from any gift or devise made to them by any woman to whom, under the pretext of religion, they shall have attached themselves. It shall become the property of the treasury, or of the relations, according to circumstances.”

* Theod. Cod. xvi. t. ii. l. 20.

*Extract from Mosheim on the Isidorian Decretals or Letters,
referred to, pp. 7, 8.*

“ ON the death of Louis the Second, a great war arose among the descendants of Charlemagne, each seeking to win the imperial title. John the Eighth, bishop of Rome, and the Italian princes, greedily caught at the opportunity of making themselves sole electors of the empire. It was in consequence of immense sums of money and vast promises, that Charles the Bald, king of the Franks, procured himself to be elected, in a public assembly, A. D. 876, by the Roman bishop and the Italian princes, king of Italy and emperor of the Romans. His successors, Carloman and Charles the Fat, were similarly chosen. Afterwards, in the turbulent times which followed, they who promised or gave most, generally with the assistance of the Roman prelates, ascended the imperial throne.

“ With equal speed and success, and mainly from the same causes, was the power of the Roman prelates in the Church increased. The most wise and just of the Roman Catholic writers confess and show that, from the time of Louis the Pious [A. D. 814—840], the ancient ecclesiastical law in Europe was gradually changed, and a new law substituted by the arts of the Roman court. Even the kings and emperors themselves permitted the ecclesiastical rights which they had derived from Charlemagne to be step by step taken away from them. The independent powers of the bishops became impaired, and the authority of the councils diminished, since the Roman prelates, elated by their prosperity and daily increase in wealth, sought to impress upon the minds of all (and, in fact, in many cases succeeded, in spite of the opposition of prudent men well skilled in the ancient law), that the Roman bishop had been appointed by Jesus, legislator and judge of the

Universal Church; that from him alone the bishops received their authority; and that no council, without his permission and command, could make a valid decree.

“In order to advance the progress of this new ecclesiastical law, so different from the old one, ancient documents were needed, as well to establish it as to protect it from the assaults of the enemy. To this end the Roman prelates procured compacts, councils, letters, and other documents, to be forged by men of their own party, which pretended that, in the very first ages of Christianity, the Roman prelates were in possession of the same authority and power which they were then claiming.

“Amongst these crafty supports of Roman power were the Decretals, as they are called, or letters of the early Roman prelates, which some unknown man, who fraudulently personated Isidore, bishop of Seville, concocted from his own brain. Traces of these forged documents are visible in the previous [the eighth] century; but in this they were openly produced, to establish the authority of the Roman bishops.” *

* Inst. Hist. Eccl. Sæc. IX. p. II. c. II. § vi.

PROOFS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

BEFORE I commence an inquiry so very extensive as that which I am about to undertake, I wish to make a few remarks.

And, first, I wish to state clearly beforehand the object of these investigations. I have presented a quotation from Mosheim, intimating that, in the eighth and ninth centuries, a series of Decretals, or letters, had been forged, which were intended to show that, from the beginning, a supremacy had been conferred by our Lord Jesus Christ on the Church of Rome over all the Churches in Christendom ; and that, in every age, the proofs of it had existed.

The object of this work is to prove, that before this, even before the close of the fifth century, similar disgraceful proceedings had been adopted. These earlier forgeries were not to show a divine right (that was not then imagined) ; but to make it appear that there had been, from the beginning, an acknowledged pre-eminence and a controlling in-

interference of the Roman Church in every country throughout Christendom; that it had issued its orders to the prelates of the other provinces, and visited disobedience with punishment; that it had received appeals from synodal decisions, and overruled them; and that all the Churches in the empire were in the habit of approaching Rome as their superior. It is my intention, in these "Proofs and Illustrations," to bring the several instances of pre-eminence and superiority under review, and to test their character. If the reader, after having perused my criticisms, shall come to the same conclusion as myself, and think them forgeries, the preceding history will then appear to him a true picture of the position of the Roman in the Universal Church during the first four centuries; that is to say, he will believe that there is no record of any interference of the Roman prelate in the affairs of other Churches during that period. He will believe that the bishop of Rome was entirely confined to his own province, and that there is not even a shadow of proof that he was regarded as invested with any power that was not equally possessed by every other metropolitan; and that the story of Peter is of a more recent date.

If I am asked, why were these forgeries introduced at that time, I reply, that partly from natural ambition, and partly, perhaps, from jealousy of the rapid advancement of the prelate of Constantinople, who, under the shadow of the court, was trampling upon the independence of the Churches

around him, the Roman bishops determined to avail themselves of their favourable position, and pursue a similar career in the West. In working out their policy, however, precedents would materially assist them. But they had none. If their way was opposed, they had nothing to fall back upon; and even if it were not opposed, precedents would make it smother.

It is my belief, and this book presents the grounds of it, that not only was ecclesiastical history largely tampered with, if not re-written, if not even composed, but that a series of documents, professing to relate to events in the previous centuries, were, perhaps even before the close of the fifth century, invented to supply this defect. They comprehend all the great divisions of the Universal Church. They relate to Africa, Spain, Gaul, Illyria, Asia Minor, Egypt, and the East.

The reader, who will take the trouble, may decide, from the evidence which I shall adduce, whether I am right in my judgment or not. It is no objection to my charge that it is too disgraceful to be attributed to the Church of Rome. It has long been acknowledged, that, in the eighth and ninth centuries, similar practices were adopted. The question, therefore, is fairly open. There is no uncharitableness in my supposition.

The documents may be examined geographically or chronologically. I shall adopt neither order systematically, but endeavour to introduce the various points of inquiry in such a manner as will

cause the least tautology; and, while in some measure one article prepares the way for another, give the reader the most information on every subject as it comes before him.

NO. I. CYPRIAN.

I WILL first examine the documents relating to an intercourse between Rome and the countries of Africa, Gaul, Spain, and Asia Minor. The same writings, by an equally happy and surprising series of accidents, are the authority for Roman interference in all these countries.

They are the letters of Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who, as will be seen, is probably an imaginary personage. But, before I enter upon them, I have yet one thing more to say — and that is, to entreat the reader's patient attention. I assure him that I will try to make his way as clear to him as I am able, that I may interest him in the investigation. I have felt that I am not writing exclusively to men learned in ecclesiastical history. I have therefore endeavoured to address my objections to the several documents and writings that will pass in review as much as possible to the reader's common sense, which, when in possession of the requisite information, is the critic to whose judgment I defer.

§ 1. AFRICA.

I WISH the reader to reflect upon the following facts:—

I. That, until the middle of the third century, there is not the least trace of any intercourse between the bishops of Rome and Carthage; indeed, we scarcely know anything of either Church.

II. That, during the short interval between A.D. 250—258, the two Churches are seen in the closest possible intimacy. It is, as it were, the lifting up of a curtain. Nothing is done of importance at either see (especially at Carthage) without an instant communication of it to the other; but there is a difference in the manner of the communication. The one speaks like a superior, and the other as an inferior. We behold African synods sending their decrees, and a notice of their excommunications, immediately to Rome. The members of both Churches are so intimately acquainted, that commentators are puzzled to distinguish Romans from Africans. The excommunicated of either Church fly to the other, and seem well known. Appeals are made from African decisions, and Cyprian, in distress, deprecates Roman interference. Ships must have been in constant readiness to convey messages; nay, so urgent is the intercourse, that Cyprian makes a clerk on the professed ground of carrying his

letters to Rome.* They seem as busy on the Mediterranean as ants on a gravel walk.

This is the picture during these eight years.

III. The curtain drops; and, although Africa is described as in a state of fearful confusion in the fourth century, there is not, during the remaining half of the third, nor the whole of the fourth, nor until the fifth, the slightest fragment of any intercourse between the orthodox Churches of Rome and Carthage. During 400 years there is no known voluntary intercourse between these two sees, except during these eight years in the middle of the period.

The next thing to which I would draw the reader's attention, is the remarkable distinctness of the system of ecclesiastical government as portrayed in Cyprian's Letters, so different from any other Ante-Nicene composition. If we read Irenæus, Clement, Tertullian, or Origen, even supposing all that is now attributed to them to have been their composition, how little can we extract that is definite on ecclesiastical polity. On the other hand, if we read Cyprian, we are in the full blaze of day. The Church's system, and her various orders, major and minor, are developed as clearly as if we were reading of the fifth century, and all seems to be of long standing, an old established system. Have feelings of astonishment never crossed the reader's mind while perusing these wonderful writings, which rise out of comparative obscurity?

* Cyp. Epist. 29.

And I wish him further to know, that if these letters (professedly written between A.D. 250—258) are, themselves or their subject—if even the very name of Cyprian is—heard of in the Church previous to the fifth century, it is under circumstances of great suspicion; and even when first heard of in the fifth century, I by no means say they are found in genuine compositions: but I will let the matter stand so at present, because I wish to postpone the consideration of Augustine's controversial writings to the next volume, which is the more fitting place for it.

These, I submit to the reader, are more than curious facts, and deserving of his grave consideration; and they will be felt the most by those who are the best acquainted with the letters. Neither such writings, nor such an author, could have been hidden for nearly two centuries.

The letters divide themselves into two great classes. As they are printed now, the first series relates to the Novatian schism, and is supposed to embrace the interval between the death of Fabian and the death of Cornelius; that is, according to the common account, A.D. 250—252. The second contains proceedings in a controversy on the re-baptizing of heretics, which is supposed to have taken place in the episcopate of Stephen, A.D. 253—257. The following sketch of such of their contents as relate to the Roman Church will show their object.

In the former series the African Church is described as under persecution; but, in reality, there

is not much of persecution, as the Christians are sacrificing by thousands. They availed themselves so promptly of the means of escaping martyrdom, and even persecution, that Cyprian positively makes a melancholy jest about it. He says, "they showed such readiness, it must have been an opportunity long desired by them; that even when the Pagan magistrate wanted to close the day's performances, the African Christians would not allow him to retire. So eager were they to abjure Christianity, that they could not wait till the next day."* I ask the reader to exercise his own judgment, and think whether a Christian prelate, especially such an one as Cyprian is represented to have been, would or could have so described his own people, however unworthy their conduct.

But these letters make an equally singular statement of an opposite kind; namely, that immediately after this eager abjuration of their Christianity, they all wanted, by a surprising inconsistency, to be restored to Church communion; and, as Cyprian objected to receive them, they, to effect this purpose, went to the few martyrs and confessors, and procured from them letters†, requiring Cyprian to re-admit them into the Church. In some cases he was allowed a previous examination as to their repentance, in others the order was peremptory; even in this form, "Admit A. B., and

* De Lapsis, § 8.

† In these documents a man is a martyr before he is martyred, and gives these letters in his lifetime. He also appoints executors, as it were, to distribute them after his death.

all belonging to him.”* The granting of pardon to the penitent lapsed is stated to have been a martyr’s prerogative, out of compliment to him, and from a notion that his wishes must avail in heaven. These letters, Cyprian says, were given by thousands. There was even a trade in them. I leave also these statements to the verdict of common sense. The eagerness of the lapsed to be restored, and Cyprian’s resistance, make the story through which is insinuated what relates to this investigation.

It should be said, too, that owing to a demand having been made by the people for his being thrown to the wild beasts, Cyprian had felt it his duty not to gratify them, and had taken the prudent precaution to retire, but to what place neither they nor we have ever found out.

The opening letter† on this subject is without any address; but it is clearly a letter from the clergy of Rome to the clergy of Carthage. They state that Crementius, a *subdeacon* (this, if genuine, would be the very first announcement in ecclesiastical history of the name of such a Church officer, and yet he is not mentioned as a novelty), had been sent to them by the Carthaginian Church, *certâ ex causâ*, and from him they had learnt of Cyprian’s retirement. They treat the Carthaginian Church, therefore, as sheep without a shepherd; and send them injunctions how to behave in the crisis, interspersing here and there a quiet

* Epist. 15.

† Epist. 8.

sarcasm on their prelate. The letter is so ambiguously expressed, that commentators do not agree in opinion whether, when the Roman clergy are asserting their pre-eminence, and their duty to watch over the flock in the absence of the shepherd, they are speaking of themselves alone, as presbyters of the Church of Rome, in the place of their bishop, or of clergy generally presiding over the whole Church of Christ. It was intended, I believe, for the former interpretation. They request the Carthaginians to transmit copies of their letter to as many Churches as they can.

With this letter they are supposed to have sent another to Cyprian, which is not seen, announcing the martyrdom of Fabian, their bishop. The sub-deacon Crementius was the bearer of both, and both were sent to Cyprian in his retirement. He is represented as being exceedingly hurt at their letter to his clergy, and, as it had no subscription, to have doubted of its genuineness. He therefore immediately sent it across the Mediterranean again, with a letter requesting satisfaction on that point.* The average time for such a trip, I should imagine, might be three or four days, with a favourable wind, from Puteoli; it had been done in two. The next letter† is from Cyprian, and assumes that his messenger had returned from Rome, with an answer admitting the genuineness of the composition, but, in some way not explained, satisfying Cyprian that they had not been sufficiently or

* Epist. 9.

† Epist. 20.

truly informed of his proceedings. He, therefore, thinks it right to give them an account of his conduct and proceedings. Having explained to them that he had retired from Carthage from no personal fear, but only for the Church's peace, he then proceeds to explain how he was managing his Church. He sends copies of thirteen letters which he had forwarded from his retirement to Carthage, to meet the several exigencies of the persecution; and he says that his behaviour towards the lapsed had not been decided upon by his own judgment alone. It seems to have been mainly their letter to his clergy which had determined him.

From the two letters * which passed about this time between Celerinus, a Roman confessor, and Lucian, a Carthaginian confessor, the reader might imagine the two Churches one family. Every one seems to know every one. It is a curious letter. The Roman confessor has got two sisters, who have lapsed at Rome. The clergy there will not yet receive them into communion. They must wait till the bishop is appointed. He, therefore, writes to the African confessor to send his sisters a remission of their sin. The latter not only does so on the authority which a martyr of the name of Paul had given him before his death (this singular privilege was then transferable), but also seems to have sent a blank form to be filled up with whatever names the Roman confessor should think fit. The proceedings of this Lucian, how-

* Epist. 21, 22.

ever, are so disorderly at Carthage, that Cyprian thinks it right to let the Roman clergy know of it. He therefore transmits * several letters all relating to the same subject; and also the letters of Celerinus and Lucian (how he got them is not easy to be explained), and a letter of an African bishop, Caldonius, and his own reply; in short, he renders a complete account of all that has passed.

At the close he informs them that their letter to his clergy has just arrived, and also a letter from the Roman confessors, Moses, Maximus, Nicostratus, and the rest, to Saturninus, Aurelius, and the rest; and that their letter had greatly strengthened him, as it strongly advocated and enforced the line of conduct which he had adopted. The Roman letter had left Rome before Cyprian's letter, explaining his proceedings, had reached them. By which piece of information we discover that, after they had learnt of Cyprian's presence near Carthage, the Roman clergy had sent their injunctions to the clergy of Carthage, without taking any notice of their bishop, or inquiring whether his views corresponded with theirs; and that Cyprian is quite grateful for this monstrous breach of order.

There are also interchanges of most turgid and unreal letters between Cyprian and the Roman Confessors.†

The next letter‡ is said to have been written by the schismatic Novatian, and probably had two

* Epist. 27.

† Epist. 31. 38.

‡ Epist. 30.

objects. One, to injure his character, by assuming that when he became a schismatic he had changed his views from interested motives; and the other to insinuate Roman supremacy. It opens to this effect:—"Although a mind conscious of having done its duty is satisfied with the approbation of God, and neither seeks the praise, nor fears the blame, of others; still they are deserving of double honour who, feeling conscious of God's approval, desire also that their conduct should be approved by their brethren. That you should do this, brother Cyprian, is not wonderful, since, owing to your native modesty, you have wished us to be *not so much judges of, as partners in*, all your proceedings; that, while we approve of your conduct, we may, *through our confirmation of it*, reap jointly with you of its fame." It then proceeds to magnify the Roman Church, and speaks of letters which they had sent into Sicily. To whom they were directed is not stated*; but they say that copies were subjoined. They then say that they have determined that no definitive arrangement could be arrived at respecting the lapsed until the election of their bishop, who would authoritatively determine it with the concurrence of a council. They affirm that many prelates were then at Rome, as well from the neighbourhood as from far distant provinces [but neither the provinces nor the prelates are named], and that in council with

* It will be seen to be an unfortunate habit in a certain class of writers, to speak of their correspondents, or other parties, with great indistinctness.

them they had made an *interim* decree, which they communicate. It is altogether opposed to Novatian's tenets, approving, under certain circumstances, of the reception of the lapsed. These statements are made among much turgid and unreal declamation. It seems incredible that this and the letter of the martyrs to "brother Cyprian," as they both call the African primate, can be real. There is the greatest deficiency of every thing which, under such circumstances, nature would dictate. If Cyprian wrote bombastically to the martyrs at Rome, they repay him in a long letter of four pages without a fact.

All these letters Cyprian is then supposed to send to Carthage, with an order that every facility may be given to foreign bishops, presbyters, and deacons, who may chance to be at Carthage, to copy them.

But what had foreign bishops to do at Rome and Carthage in this time of fiery persecution? and why should the Roman clergy have been so angry with Cyprian for a temporary concealment in the neighbourhood of his people, and so friendly with these foreign and Italian bishops, who had entirely deserted their flocks? Flight in the time of persecution was episcopal ignominy. But this by the by.

Cyprian is again writing to Rome.* "Affection and propriety," he says, "require that I should state to you all that is passing here; that our

* Epist. 35.

proceedings may be the same ;” and he sends them more letters. They immediately reply*, and add this very curious postscript :—“ As respects Privatus of Lambese, you have *according to your custom* made us acquainted with what troubles you. We all ought to watch over the body of the whole Church, whose members are distributed throughout every province. But, before your letter had arrived, we had not been deceived by his cunning. For when, previously, Futurus, one of the party, wished fraudulently to obtain a letter from us, we knew who he was, and we did not give it.”

It is said that the meaning of a letter is often in the postscript ; I think it is so here. It is a little volume. This Privatus was a bishop, and had been tried in Africa and deposed. What was the object of this mysterious letter, for which he had sent to Rome, but which he failed to obtain ? No doubt it was meant that the reader should gather from this notice that Privatus had made an appeal to Rome for a reversal of the African decision ; that Cyprian, having heard of it, had written to deprecate such an interference ; and that the Roman Church, knowing the character of the appellant, had not granted the letter.

Such is said to have been the intercourse between the two Churches during the year of interval between Fabian’s martyrdom and the election of Cornelius. On that election a corre-

* Epist. 36.

spondence is seen between him and Cyprian of the most intimate kind. Eight letters are given from Cyprian to Cornelius, and two from Cornelius to Cyprian. They show the relations between the Churches. We learn that the Novatians had immediately sent explanatory letters to Africa to announce their secession, which took place, it is represented, on the election of Cornelius. It would also seem that two African prelates had attended at the election and consecration of Cornelius. It is not exactly said that it was their duty to go, but it is a very suspicious-looking proceeding; and when Novatian's legates had come to Africa with their tale, Cyprian immediately sent two more bishops to Rome, to know its truth, and endeavour to compose the schism. He also wrote a letter himself. When the bishops returned they spoke very highly of Cornelius and of the legality of his election; and in consequence Novatian's people, who seem to have been very unruly at Carthage, and to have endeavoured to intrude into a council then sitting, and to force it to take notice of their charges against Cornelius, were repulsed on the plea that Cornelius ought not to be subjected to slanderous reports at a distance where no answer could be immediately given.

This information is communicated to Cornelius*, and he soon relates in return †, with great exactness, the recantation of the Confessors who had joined Novatian in his schism. He even sends

* Epist. 44, 45.

† Epist. 49.

the information off to Cyprian, the very same evening, of the synod; along with verbatim copies of the opinions of the different bishops who took part in the council; but all these are missing. Ships were always ready, and the wind was always fair; and as he puts down word for word the language of the schismatics on their return to unity, I suppose there is some meaning in it, more perhaps than is at first sight imagined. "We acknowledge Cornelius, *bishop of the most holy Catholic Church*, chosen by Almighty God and our Lord Christ. We confess our error. We have been imposed upon. We have been deluded by plausible misrepresentations. For although we seemed to be in communion with a schismatic and heretic, our heart was always in the Church. We are not ignorant that there is one God, and that one Christ is Lord whom we have confessed, and one Holy Spirit; and that there ought to be *one bishop in the Catholic Church*."

In spite of all the twistings of commentators, I suspect that there is some meaning in those expressions which will be more fashionable at Rome than at Canterbury.

There are also two more letters from Cyprian to the Confessors; one before and one after their return; and also a short one from them to him.

If we grant to the Cyprianic letters the dates which have been hitherto assigned to them, we may say that the fifty-fifth contains the first mention of the chair of Peter as applied to Rome. There is no attribution in any Ante-Nicene writ-

ings which I have seen of any chair to any Apostle, except in these writings of Cyprian, in which the Roman chair is assigned to Peter.

The fifty-seventh is a synodal letter from Africa to Cornelius, telling him of a council which they had held, and the decree which they had made, and which they hope he will approve.

The fifty-ninth is an important letter. A rival bishop of Carthage is introduced (nay there are two); but one is introduced as sending his legate to Cornelius. The legate is said to have been a man of most atrocious character, as most of Cyprian's opponents are, and to have been excommunicated by a council at Carthage. The pseudo-bishop had been consecrated by a party of African bishops, all of whom, either for crimes or heresy, had been excommunicated at Carthage, and one of them also at Rome. The new bishop, therefore, does not seem to have begun his career under good auspices. The first thing, however, that he does, and rather a bold one it would seem, but still it only the more shows its necessity, is to send his legate to Cornelius to announce his election. At first the legate is said to have been repelled, and Cornelius writes to tell Cyprian so;—but by a second letter, which arrived also by the same messenger, an acolyte (these letters contain the first announcement of this officer, and he would appear to be no novelty), it would seem that Cornelius had by strong menaces and threats been afterwards induced, if not to receive his letter, yet to do something which was in some measure an acknowledgment of

the new bishop. Cyprian in this letter replies, but instead of saying what right have you to interfere in an African quarrel, or to receive any letters from Carthage except from me, he expresses great distress at Cornelius's conduct, and enters upon a proof that he is the true bishop of Carthage, vindicating his conduct from some charges which are represented as having been made against him, and in return traducing his opponents, whose character should have prevented Cornelius from attending to their statements: all which implies that there was an authority vested in Cornelius to enter upon the question, whether Cyprian was true bishop of Carthage; only in this case the infamy of his opponents was so well known, while Cyprian's position was so fully acknowledged, that Cornelius was not justified in paying the least attention to the complaint. Such appears to me to be the meaning of this letter.

We may infer from it, too, that every act of the African Church was notified to Rome. We are told, moreover, that Cyprian had sent the names of all the orthodox bishops to Cornelius, that he might know to whom to write; and in a previous letter we hear of an African prelate writing to Cornelius.

Cyprian then reverts to the charges made against himself; and after roundly abusing his opponents, in which art he is a most accomplished adept, he adds, as an additional offence, that "they had dared even to go to Rome; and the principal Church whence sacerdotal unity has its rise [the

first mention of this idea], and to carry along with them letters from profane schismatics, and had forgot that the persons they were approaching were Romans, whose faith the Apostle had proclaimed, and with whom falsehood could not prevail." He then adds that his opponents ought not to have appealed from Africa to Rome. Africa was the country in which to try an African cause. They ought not to depreciate the authority of an African synod. But there is no statement that the bishop of Rome could not have disturbed the African decision. The language is very ambiguous.

The letters to Cornelius close with one congratulating him on his confession of Christ, and thus terminates the first series.

The second series of the Cyprianic letters is supposed to have sprung from a controversy in the days of Stephen, bishop of Rome, on the question whether heretics, on coming over to the Church, should be baptized. Cyprian is represented as maintaining the affirmative, and Stephen the negative.

There is first a report of a letter which turns out to have been written by Stephen; also of a letter from Stephen to Cyprian; but neither are seen; only a sentence or two is bestowed upon us. This interference of Stephen is represented as having caused much tumult in Africa. Many synods were held, and one synodal letter is sent to Stephen, containing two decrees which they had made. These are, in reality, the forty-fifth and forty-sixth of the Apostolical Canons. Although

Cyprian maintains his right of private judgment in his diocese, still there are angry insinuations about a bishop of bishops, and expressions like the following are now and then seen.

“Reason, and not custom, should prevail. Peter [in whose chair Stephen was sitting], whom the Lord chose first, and on whom he built his Church when Paul was disputing with him afterwards on circumcision, did not claim more than he ought, or arrogantly take upon himself to say that he was the primate, and that he ought to be obeyed by more recent Apostles; nor did he despise Paul because he had been previously a persecutor; but he yielded to truth and reason, setting us an example.” *

But the important letter of this controversy is one from Firmilian, bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, a man second to none of his day. It is represented that he is of the same opinion with Cyprian on this subject; and that Cyprian had sent a deacon to him, all the way from Carthage, with a letter; and this, the seventy-fifth in the Cyprianic series, is his reply. It reads exactly as if it was one of Cyprian's; but the writer, I suppose, intends to account for that by saying, that he had read over Cyprian's letter so often that he had got it by heart, and that there was no harm in saying the same thing twice over. Moreover, as Cyprian's deacon was in such haste to return home, owing to the approach of winter (after

* Epist. 71.

a journey from Africa to Cappadocia, the rest of a day or two might have been thought not unreasonable), he really could only say what first came into his head. But he adds some facts, very much indeed to the purpose; namely, that Stephen had boasted of the place of his bishopric, of his succession from Peter, on whom the Church was built, and that Stephen had excommunicated him and crowds of Churches around him. And, although he is as distinguished a professor as Cyprian of the art of abuse, and does not spare Stephen, yet it appears from this letter that Stephen had sat on Peter's chair, and had excommunicated him; and these, no doubt, were the points which the real author of the letter had in view. The abuse was added to make the letter look less suspicious. It is difficult to say what was Cyprian's own fate in this controversy. To have excommunicated a bishop they were going to martyr would have been a strong measure; but to doubt that the bishop of Rome could not have excommunicated him, would have been worse, if not absurd, as Victor had already by implication excommunicated at least some three or four of the Apostles; and, therefore, it is left an open question: but it would seem that when Cyprian had sent bishops to Rome, apparently to deprecate Stephen's anger, he would not speak to them, nor allow them food nor lodging.

The reader will now be able to conjecture the drift and object of these letters, which are so fortunately preserved to us, and which cast so bright

a flash of light across the middle of four centuries of Cimmerian darkness. He will see the close intercourse between Rome and Carthage, and learn that in fact Carthage is only an offshoot of Rome. He will see that nothing of importance passed in Africa but it was immediately notified to Rome; that synodal decrees passed there were all sent for Roman approval. He will gather that their sentences of excommunication were immediately forwarded to Rome, and that appeals were frequently made from African decisions, and more or less listened to; and that if not listened to, it was from no want of authority in the Roman prelate, but only from his own judgment and information that they were rejected. He will see also the Roman prelate connected with Peter, sitting on the same chair, and deriving his authority through him; and will consequently understand him to be the centre of unity, as Peter was; and he will be surprised by some mysterious expressions importing that, at that early (or, as it is the first appearance, should we say that late?) period, the notion was maintained that there was properly only one bishop of the Catholic Church, and that the bishop of Rome was that one.

So much for the meaning of these letters as respects the African Church; and the reader will see that, supposing them to have been written with the object of asserting a Roman supremacy, that object could hardly have been more skilfully, and less obtrusively, attained.

§ 2. SPAIN.

LET us now look at what these letters communicate respecting the Spanish Church.

Of any intercourse between this Church and the Church of Rome during the period embraced by this volume, we know nothing except what these letters communicate. One only of Cyprian's letters relates to Spain*; but, although the information lies in a little space, it is a volume in importance. There was less reserve, perhaps, necessary with Spain than with Africa.

It appears from this letter, that two Spanish bishops had been tried and deposed by Spanish synods for very atrocious crimes; and that two successors had been canonically elected into their places; that certainly one of the deposed prelates (most probably both) had appealed to Stephen; that he had sent them back with letters ordering their restoration; and that they had returned to Spain, and, ousting the new bishops, had resumed their episcopal functions.

It appears, also, that the Spanish Church was thrown into great confusion by this interference, and had written to the African Church to know what they should do, and had sent their letter apparently by the new bishops. Cyprian writes a synodal reply, in which he says that they had done very right; that Stephen, through ignorance of the facts, had done very wrong; and that they

* Epist. 67.

must resist the invasion; and there the information stops.

But quite enough is learnt. It is seen that the Spanish bishops went all the way from Spain (one from Merida and the other from Leon and Astorga, opposite extremities) to the Roman prelate, complaining of the Spanish synodal decision; that he overruled it without even a new trial, or hearing the Spanish Church; that the deposed bishops, on the strength of his letter, had turned out their successors, and resumed their duties; and that the Spanish Church knew not how to act.

Stephen is blamed, but no doubt is uttered as to his right to interfere. There would have been no blame if its exercise had been justified by circumstances. Here, however, he was employing it in favour of two men utterly unfit for the episcopate. The reader will therefore see a reason for the composition of these letters as respects Spain.

§ 3. GAUL.

LET us now turn to Gaul. Another fortunate disturbance in the Gaulish Church at this same period casts a ray of light on the relations of Rome with that Church. A letter or two is recorded as having been written by some martyrs at Lyons and Vienne to Eleutherus, bishop of Rome, about the year A.D. 177, and they who can

may believe them genuine, but I cannot. I should like first to see the Latin original, for I cannot understand the Greek version. With the exception of these martyrs (of whose trials a record is preserved, but probably not written at the time), there is no mention of any intercourse between the Roman and Gaulish Churches for these four centuries. The letter of Cyprian, therefore, is the more valuable, particularly as the information it gives is so important.* Marcian, bishop of Arles, had adopted Novatian's tenets. This had given offence to Faustinus, bishop of Lyons, and his suffragans ; and they had sent a synodal letter to Stephen, giving him the information, and apparently desiring that he would procure his deposition. For some cause not stated, Stephen is said to have taken no notice of it. They, therefore, wrote once and again to Cyprian, saying that they had told Stephen, but he had paid no attention to their letter, and, I suppose, urging Cyprian also to write to him. The letter of Cyprian to Stephen is preserved ; in which, having told him that it is the duty of all bishops to interfere, he urges him to send a very plain and peremptory letter to the province and people of Arles ; as well excommunicating Marcian, as ordering them to appoint a successor ; and then begs him to let him know who is appointed.

Whether Stephen did write is not said. But Stephen (we are to understand) was applied to for such a letter by both Faustinus and Cyprian, and,

* Epist. 68.

therefore, obviously considered by them as having a special right to exercise that sort of interference ; and that, with the inevitable inference which every reader must draw from it, was all that the real author of Cyprian's letter wanted to suggest.

The Roman writers refer with great triumph to this letter. It acknowledges the power of excommunicating a metropolitan bishop, and of ordering a new election. They gravely tell us that no doubt Stephen wrote, as Marcian's name is not found in the diptychs of that Church. I will venture upon another solution of that silence. There never was such a bishop. The diptych was made before Stephen's dilatory letter had reached them.

§ 4. ASIA MINOR.

BUT these letters, so full of singular information of matters in the West, are invaluable as respects another country — Asia Minor. There is only one other notice (soon to be reviewed), during the first four centuries, of any relation between the Churches of Rome and the Churches of Asia Minor. This darkness is happily dispersed by a very unexpected proceeding of Cyprian's. He sent a deacon all the way to Asia Minor, to Cæsarea in Cappadocia. No object for this long and unexampled journey is stated ; it seems to have been a mere message, as the man would hardly wait for the reply. But luckily he did

wait, and we have got it; and the information it conveys as coming from the party leaves no doubt of its truth. It is curious, but it is to the same effect as all the others. By some extraordinary accident they all tell of Roman supremacy. Here Firmilian states that Stephen was boasting that he was sitting on the chair of Peter, and had excommunicated the primate of Cappadocia and the neighbouring nations, and the Churches beyond him. This is supported by a letter of equal veracity written by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, to Sixtus II., Stephen's successor.

And here must be noticed another singular circumstance that renders these eight years so memorable in the Church history of these four centuries. Although two Alexandrian bishops had fled into the West (Athanasius, about A.D. 345, to Treves in Gaul; and Peter, about A.D. 373, to Rome) to save their lives during persecution, still no intercourse between the Churches of Rome and Alexandria is known to have taken place during the period embraced in this volume, except just at this time, when the curtain being momentarily raised, we see the same active intercourse and proceedings taking place between Rome and Alexandria as are going on between Rome and Carthage. Dionysius, the bishop, is doing nothing but writing. I have tried several times to enumerate the names of his compositions, but have never yet succeeded. Letters without end are going to Rome. Like Cyprian, he writes not

only to the bishops, but to the clergy, orthodox and heretical, to the Confessors, and even to Novatian himself. He is seen also, as Cyprian, consulting the Roman prelate, and communicating information. In short, Alexandria is another Carthage, another offshoot of Rome; they all seem to know each other perfectly: and yet in spite of all this intimacy, when this bright period is gone, the same impenetrable darkness again occurs for a century and a half.

Now I wish the reader to reflect upon these facts. Let common sense interpose and examine them. There is no account, during the period embraced by this volume, of any intercourse between the Church of Rome and the Churches of Africa, Spain, Gaul, Asia Minor (with one exception), and Alexandria, except during this period of eight years. During that short space of time, information pours in upon us like a flood, and all of the same tendency; all showing the supremacy of the Church of Rome, and yet (what seems utterly inconceivable, if they are true) the assumed facts of these eight years are unknown to, and unsupported by, any genuine writings. There is nothing, I believe, anywhere, on which reliance can be placed, to corroborate either them or the supremacy they infer. I cannot help asking what is the verdict of common sense upon their character?

The records of the fifth century will explain these proceedings, but nothing in Cyprian's letters savours of the third century.

§ 5. EXAMINATION OF THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

TO SUPPORT THE GENUINENESS OF THE LETTERS
OF CYPRIAN.

HAVING examined these letters, and seen that they are open to very great suspicion, let us now review the external evidence which can be brought forward to support them. They are noticed previous to the fifth century in a professed translation of the "Chronicle" of Eusebius by Jerome, in Jerome's book on "Ecclesiastical Writers," in a Dialogue stated to be written by Jerome against the disciples of Lucifer, bishop of Carali, and in a work that goes under the name of Pacian.

I will describe the "Chronicle" of Eusebius and its translation by Jerome for the benefit of those readers who may not know the work.

The "Chronicle" of Eusebius has not descended to us as a whole. There is a translation of it, made by Jerome, but with his additions. The "Chronicle" itself, however, existed for many centuries, and was made use of by later Greek chronologists, especially by George, who occupied the position of Syncellus to Tarasius, bishop of Constantinople, at the close of the eighth century. My belief is, that in his work we have the whole of that portion of the "Chronicle" of Eusebius which comprised the three first centuries of the Christian era, with interpolations made by himself or others, out of the "Ecclesiastical History" of the same writer. What portion therefore of the work of George Syn-

cellus was the "Chronicle" of Eusebius is matter of inference; and yet I think, as far as our investigations require it, of very easy determination.

There is little doubt that in the Eusebian "Chronicle," whenever a bishop was named, it was in this form:—"Victor, 14 bishop of Rome, 14 years;" that is, he was 14th bishop of Rome, and his episcopate continued 14 years. There were no additions. This seems to have been his way in his enumeration of the successions of the important sees of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. But between the successions, statements are to be found in the work of George, which seem clearly to have been additions.

Let us now turn to that part of the translation by Jerome which affects this investigation. It is a translation of Eusebius, with additions "relating to the Roman history." "Not that Eusebius was ignorant of the facts added," says Jerome, "but, writing to Greeks, he thought it unnecessary to introduce them." Jerome took them "from Tranquillus and other illustrious historians." This points to profane history, and has no reference to any thing ecclesiastical. But beside the original "Chronicle" of Eusebius, and the Roman additions by Jerome, there is clearly in Jerome's translation another class of additions, which by no means are to be found in "Tranquillus or other illustrious historians;" and these it will be necessary to particularise. I will transcribe those which relate to the period of two centuries preceding the Council of Nice:—

“A.D. 145. It was decreed by Pius [bishop of Rome], that our Lord’s resurrection should be kept on the Sunday; which was confirmed afterwards by many pontiffs.”

This, however, is not in the older MS.; but I wish I knew the date of the oldest, which, as far as I can see, is not given in the prefatory notices.

“A.D. 189. Apollonius, a senator of Rome, having read to the senate a remarkable book which he had composed on the Christian faith, was beheaded.”

This, too, is not in the older MS.

“A.D. 194. Victor, bishop of Rome, was bishop for ten years.”

This is all that either Eusebius or George Syncellus say about him; only they give him fourteen years, and not ten. But Jerome’s translation contains the following addition:—“Some small works of his on religion are extant.”

“A.D. 197. Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, and Theophilus, bishop of Cæsarea, Polycrates also and Bacchylus, bishops of the Asiatic province, are celebrated.”

This is neither in Eusebius nor George Syncellus, but an addition altogether.

“A.D. 198. A question arose in Asia among the bishops, Whether, according to the Law of Moses, the pasch should be observed on the 14th day of the moon? Victor, bishop of the Roman city, and Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, Polycrates also, and Irenæus and Bacchylus, and very many shep-

herds of the Churches, published by letter their opinions. These letters are yet extant."

All this is an addition.

"A.D. 213. Alexander is ordained twenty-fifth bishop of Jerusalem, Narcissus being yet alive, and governing the Church along with him."

All about Narcissus is an addition.

"A.D. 255. Cornelius is twentieth bishop of Rome after Fabian's glorious martyrdom. He was himself martyred. There are extant eight letters of Cyprian to him."

The martyrdom of Cornelius, and Cyprian's letters on which it depends, are an addition.

Same year. "The plague ravaged many provinces throughout the world, but chiefly Alexandria and Egypt, as writes Dionysius; and Cyprian, in his work 'De Mortalitate,' is a witness."

The mention of Dionysius and Cyprian is an addition.

Same year. "Novatus, a presbyter of Cyprian, coming to Rome, attaches to himself Novatian and the rest of the Confessors, because Cornelius had received the penitent apostates."

In George Syncellus, the Greek is, "Novatus the heresiarch, a presbyter of Rome, is celebrated." The rest is from Cedrenus. No mention, therefore, in either Eusebius or George, of Novatus or of Cyprian. It may be a question whether the "Chronicle" of Eusebius contained even the name of Novatian, as the notice of him is so different, as will be seen, in the Armenian version.

"A.D. 256. Lucius, twenty-first bishop of the

Roman Church, holds the episcopate eight months; after whom Stephen held it three years. Letters of Cyprian to both are extant."

The mention of the letters of Cyprian is an addition.

"A.D. 259. Cyprian, first a rhetorician, then a presbyter, at length bishop of Carthage, is martyred."

This is an addition of George Syncellus. The "Chronicle" of Eusebius, as we shall see, did not contain the name of Cyprian.

After this notice of Cyprian, there is no discrepancy between the Greek and the translation, beyond the mention of a martyr or two, to A. D. 325.

I wish the reader now to re-consider these additions. They certainly are not Eusebian; and I think he will not regard them as extracted from Tranquillus, and other illustrious historians. There must have been a third party, giving a finishing touch to the whole.

With two exceptions, they are all connected with Cyprian and Victor; that is, with the stories which I am obliged to regard, and am here treating, as forgeries. They were not the cause of my suspecting the forgeries. I had formed my own opinion of the documents before I discovered these significant additions; and the reader may believe that they did not lessen my suspicions.

The story of Pius was inserted to strengthen the story of Victor, as will be seen hereafter.

Victor, also, must have writings attributed to him. An essay on the pasch, as Jerome is made

to say in the work on "Ecclesiastical Writers," and extant in his day too, but to the irreparable loss of the Church now lost; and, as far as can be ascertained, never seen but by Jerome.

The additions then present a list of celebrated bishops, and Theophilus is called bishop of Cæsarea without saying which Cæsarea. Jerome, I think, would not have so written; and Bacchylus is called a prelate of the Asiatic diocese. In Eusebius's "History" he is styled of Corinth. One designation is perhaps quite as correct as the other, which made the copyist indifferent. This is succeeded by an account of the controversy about the pasch; and Victor is only introduced as giving his opinion; a very modest opinion indeed, if Eusebius's history speaks truth. No mention is made of his excommunicatory proceedings; but, had they been true, such a fact, the most important at that time known in ecclesiastical history, and so subversive of the independence of the Churches of Christendom, would not, and could not, have been either forgotten or concealed.

The extracts conclude with five consecutive announcements about Cyprian; and, until the last, the reader is never told who or what Cyprian was. He might have been a Roman general for any thing the reader could learn. The interpolator approaching the work merely to make the insertions, and having his own head so full of Cyprian, forgot that no one else knew any thing about him, and hence the suspicious occurrence.

As George Syncellus complains that Eusebius

had never noticed Cyprian's martyrdom, but only alluded to this great bishop in a history of the controversy on rebaptism, there is no doubt that his name even was not in the "Chronicle." This is a very important fact. It almost proves that Eusebius had never heard of him; for martyred bishops, especially if noted prelates, were held in high honour, and, not being of frequent occurrence, were the subjects of the chronicler. Few Churches of antiquity could boast of a Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Hooper.

Will the reader have now the kindness to review these additions, and ask himself what could be the motive for them?

Why should those about Cyprian have been so thrust forward, in notices not even relating to him, if there had not been some special, and probably sinister, purpose? There is no similar instance.* There had not been so many popes of the names of Cornelius, Lucius, and Stephen (there had been no others), that it was necessary to distinguish

* The equally to be suspected introduction of the name of Dionysius, without saying who he was, occurs once; and it is curious that in the work published by Cardinal Mai, the very learned librarian of the Vatican, which professes to be a translation from an Armenian translation of the original Greek Chronicle (a matter not yet, I think, proved), there is the following alteration in the announcement about Novatian. "Novatius separated from the Church, but introduced heresy, whom Dionysius in a prolix letter reproves." Eusebius would not have so described Dionysius, and he could not have called the letter inserted into his "Ecclesiastical History" prolix. It does not occupy ten lines.

them by such a reference. Surely it was no such honour for the bishop of Rome to have had a bishop of Carthage for his correspondent, as that he should be pointed out in the streets, or descend down to posterity in a chronicle as the man to whom Cyprian had written. And all this is the more singular, because the peculiar contents of these so frequently mentioned letters were, at the time, utterly unknown in the world. There is no genuine proof that any one of them had been seen, or had even been heard of. No miscalled religious novel, to which class of composition these letters belong, could have perished more completely than they had. And as these additions terminate with the notice of these suspicious documents, it confirms, I think most forcibly, a very natural conclusion, that the sole object of their introduction was to support Victor's excommunication and Cyprian's letters.

Let us now turn to the "Ecclesiastical History" of Eusebius, and see how these letters are there introduced, though it is almost needless to inquire. If martyred bishops were the glory of the Universal Church, and if Eusebius felt them to be so, as I think is clear from his book, he never could have known of such a Cyprian, or he would have introduced his name and martyrdom into his "Chronicle."* Any notice of him therefore, in his "History," would, of itself, be in the highest

* The name of Cyprian never appears in the Armenian translation of the "Chronicle" above-mentioned.

degree suspicious. But we will see what is said of him in that work.

If the reader will turn to the 43d chapter of the 6th book he will there read, that “a very great synod was assembled at Rome, consisting of sixty bishops, and yet more presbyters and deacons; and that, in the other provinces, the bishops separately consulted upon what was to be done, and all agreed in the following decree:—That Novatus and those belonging to him, and all of the like opinions, should be excommunicated; and that the penitent lapsed should be received. A letter from Cornelius, bishop of Rome, to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, is still extant, giving an account of the Roman synod, and the decrees in Italy and Africa. And another, in the Latin language, of Cyprian and the Africans, from which it is learnt that they agreed in giving aid to the fallen, and in excommunicating Novatus and his followers.”

It will be observed that, in this passage, Cyprian has no title given to him. This is contrary to the unfailing practice of the Eusebian “History,” which, on the first introduction of a prelate, always gives (as any man of sense naturally would) the name of his see, to point out who he was, and to prevent the reader from confounding him with any contemporary namesake. But in accordance with the practice of the interpolator of Jerome’s translation of the “Chronicle,” he is here only called Cyprian. But there is another very suspicious circumstance connected with this extract. A very accurate

translation of this "History" as we now have it, was made, it is said, by Ruffinus of Aquileia, sometime in the first quarter of the fifth century, and the translation of this passage is worthy of attention. It contains no mention of a synodal letter of Cyprian and the Africans, but of a treatise by Cyprian. "But Cyprian," he translates, "published a book on the lapsed, most eloquently written, in which he exhorted the lapsed to repentance, and declared that those who opposed their reception were alien from the merciful feelings of Christ." This is a very marked discrepancy. And so accurate is the translation in conveying the substance of the history, although it may be expanded a little in one place and contracted in another, that where it varies in substance no doubt can be felt that his manuscript had contained a different statement; or if it be supposed that Ruffinus's copy of Eusebius resembled ours, and that he had wilfully altered it, it would indicate that he knew of no synodal letter, and inserted what he had seen, and what he thought must have been intended. Now with respect to Eusebius's version there is this most suspicious circumstance; the reader is not told to whom that letter was addressed; and, what is more, there is no such letter extant. It is not even among the "eight" directed to Cornelius; and, what is also very curious, although there is a book extant answering to the title of Ruffinus, unfortunately its contents do not correspond to his description,

as there is not a word in it about any condemnation of the Novatian tenets. Its object is to restrain the lapsed from wishing a too hasty return to the Church. This is all very provoking, and would really seem to imply that both passages are spurious; and, indeed, no character could well stand that was in close connection with that letter of Cornelius to Fabian. Every notice of these letters, therefore, whether in the writings of Jerome or Eusebius, is, hitherto, in the highest degree suspicious.

Let us now turn to that album of the interpolator, the "Book of Ecclesiastical Writers" by Jerome. It is, if properly understood, a most instructive book. Its omissions and commissions are equally significant. We find there the same desire to thrust Cyprian forward, as we have seen in his translation of the "Chronicle," and in the same form.

The first notice of him is "Cornelius, bishop of Rome, to whom Cyprian wrote eight letters."

The next article is an account of Cyprian himself. It is in the most suspicious form.

"Cyprian, the African, taught rhetoric with great fame. Afterwards, by the persuasion of a presbyter, Cæcilius, from whom he took his cognomen, he became a Christian, and gave all his wealth to the poor. And not long after he was made presbyter, and also bishop of Carthage. It is superfluous to give an idea of his mind or genius, since his works are clearer than the sun." I am

not quite sure that I understand this passage, but I believe him to mean, that they were so well known, it was unnecessary to say any thing about them or their author. But the more noted the writer, it might have been imagined, the greater claim he had for special notice, both of himself and of his works, in the pages of a book on ecclesiastical writers, or illustrious men, unless it was Jerome's object to compile a *Dunciad*. What would be said of a compiler of the lives of military heroes, if, when he approached the Duke of Wellington, he was to pass over his triumphs without more notice than that he and they were so well known, it was needless to say any thing about them? But, as the peculiar works which this writer wished to introduce had not yet been seen, it was perhaps a prudent mode of ushering them into notice. The press did not exist in those days; there were no newspapers in which to advertise, nor any clerical book clubs for circulation. A small volume, two centuries old, could not be doubted, because it had not been heard of in any particular locality; and people's minds were growing more credulous, and they were the less able to detect imposition, the less they knew. And by the close of the fifth century they were beginning to know very little that was worth knowing. But we have not yet done with the notices of Cyprian in the "*Book on Ecclesiastical Writers*."

The next name is "Pontius, deacon of Cyprian, who was with him in exile till the day of his

death, and left an excellent volume of his life and passion."

It is a manifestly spurious work. No one who had been with Cyprian, and known him, could have written his life, a life so full of incident, if the letters are true, in that style.

The next name is Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria. It might have been thought difficult to introduce Cyprian here. But no. "He, agreeing with Cyprian and the African synod in the propriety of rebaptizing heretics," &c.; a fact, by the by, not to be learnt from the "Church History" of Eusebius.

The next name is Novatian. Under that head Cyprian is twice introduced, and on each occasion without any title. In short it is the "Chronicle" over again. If one is interpolated, so is the other. He who touched one, touched the other.

My belief respecting this book of Jerome on ecclesiastical writers is, that its foundation was originally laid by Jerome; but that, like the translation of the "Chronicle," it has received additions; and these additions are connected with what I believe to be spurious writings. It was interpolated by some one before the birth of the Athanasian writings, as neither those writings, nor the council, nor any of the forgeries connected with that council, are mentioned either in the "Chronicle" or the "Book of Ecclesiastical Writers." Neither do they give support to any statements which depend on the Athanasian writings. This will be

very clearly seen when we notice the story of the two Dionysiuses of Rome and Alexandria. As Cyprian is never mentioned in any genuine work of Jerome, as the author of any of these letters, we may, without much hesitation, conclude that he would not have thrust him so many times forward under that character in the "Chronicle" and into his "Book of Ecclesiastical Writers," an honour which he has conferred on no one else. There must have been some particular reason for it; and I submit to the common sense of the reader that the interpolation is manifest.

But there are two works of the fourth century in which these letters are mentioned. One of them professes to be written by Jerome against the followers of Lucifer, bishop of Carali; and the other by a Spanish bishop, Pacian of Barcelona. They must, therefore, be noticed.

The story of Lucifer, bishop of Carali, in Sardinia, having, on his return from exile, gone to Antioch, and consecrated Paulinus, a presbyter of Antioch, to be the Catholic bishop of that see, I have passed over in the history as an entire fiction. Neither the fact, nor its reported consequences, rest on any evidence entitled to belief. It is difficult to say whether Lucifer originated any or what schism. Jerome, in his "Book on Ecclesiastical Writers," makes no allusion to it, although that work must be conjectured to have been composed after his tract against Lucifer's disciples, or the tract must be given up. Nor do Epiphanius and Phi-

lastrius, two writers on heresies, mention it. Augustine, whose diocese was in the north of Italy, opposite to Carali in the south of Sardinia, mentions a Luciferian schism; but it is curious that he gives no allusion to its nature. It, perhaps, did not fall within his subject, or purpose, to do more than to ward off from them the charge of a heresy on the generation of the soul. The tenet which Lucifer is said to have held was, that it was not lawful to hold communion with Arians, nor even with those who received them into their communion; which consequently, after the Councils of Rimini, Seleucia, and Constantinople, A. D. 359, 360, reduced the Catholic Church to very small dimensions: but I own that such a tenet, under the circumstances, seems too absurd to be believed, especially if Lucifer was the person Jerome described him. The tract I am about to notice, supposes a controversy between Jerome and a member of this Purist sect. It is not my intention, in the present volume, to enter into an examination of Jerome's writings; but I will point out briefly what in this tract my reader's common sense will assure him could not have been written by the very learned man whose name it bears. I am alluding to his account of the conclusion of the Council of Rimini. It must be remembered that, for twenty years, the Arians had been riding roughshod over the East; and, for six years previous to this Council, the Western bishops had been subjected to a most violent persecution.

Every prelate of note who would not subscribe as they wished, was an exile; and, according to the accounts, nothing could exceed the hatred with which the Arians were regarded. But amongst them the man who is held up to the greatest execration was Valens, bishop of Mursa. He had even been self-convicted, it is said, of false testimony against Athanasius. There was no craft nor duplicity of which he was not considered capable.

At the Council of Rimini this prelate produced an Arian creed, which was scouted by the council, and himself, in consequence of it, deposed. He is then said to have gone to the emperor, and not only to have prejudiced him against the ten legates whom that council had sent, but also by fraud and trickery to have induced these Rimini legates to sign the Arian creed. He is now introduced as having been sent back by the emperor to Rimini to complete the work he had so successfully commenced, by procuring the signatures of the whole council. It might have been imagined that these were bad antecedents to induce the Western prelates to believe either him or any thing that he proposed. Quite the contrary if Jerome wrote this tract — Jerome, too, who is considered a very pillar of orthodoxy, a rigid Occidental.

He says, “at that time nothing seemed so pious and fitting to the servant of God as unity, especially if the surface of the creed had no appearance

of heresy." If this be true, the whole history of the previous twenty years is a simple falsehood. He then proceeds to represent the feelings of the orthodox on reconsidering the creed which Valens was presenting to them, and which was the same that they had previously anathematised in the council.

"We believe in the one true God, the Father Almighty." "Well, so do we," said the orthodox.

"We believe in the only begotten Son of God, who before all ages, and before all beginning, was born of God. But the only begotten was born only of the only Father, God of God, like to the Father who begat him according to the Scriptures, whose generation no one knows except he who begot him." "Was there here inserted," the orthodox said, "'there was a time when he was not ;' or that 'he was created out of nothing ;' or that 'the Son of God was a creature.' No such thing ; the faith is perfect to believe God of God. And it said, too, that 'the only begotten was born only of one only Father.' What is the meaning of born ? certainly not made. The word born took away all suspicion of a creature."

Again the creed continued : — "'Who came down from Heaven ; was conceived by the Holy Ghost ; born of the Virgin Mary ; crucified under Pontius Pilate. The third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into Heaven, sits at the right hand of God : from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.'" "All this sounded

orthodox," says Jerome; "and amidst so much that was good no one suspected poison."

"For the rejection of the word 'substance' a plausible reason was given. The word, they said, because it was not found in the Scriptures, and because it gave offence from its novelty to many of the weaker brethren, would be better withdrawn. Well, provided the doctrine was safe, the bishops had no contest about the word. Finally, at the very time when a popular rumour arose that there was fraud in the proposed creed, Valens, the bishop of Mursa, who had written it, professed, in the presence of Taurus, the Prætorian Prefect, who was present at the synod by the king's order, that he was himself no Arian, that he thoroughly abhorred their blasphemies. This, however, being said in private, did not extinguish the rumour. Therefore, on another day, in the church at Rimini, in the presence of a number of bishops and of the laity, Muzonius, bishop of the province of Byzacia, to whom, on account of his age, all paid deference, thus spoke:—'The reports which have been spread abroad, and brought to us, we command that some one read, that what is evil and abhorrent to our ears and hearts may be unanimously condemned.' All the bishops replied, 'Be it so.' Accordingly, when Claudius, bishop of the province of Picenum, had begun to read the blasphemies attributed to Valens, Valens denied them, and said, 'If any one denies that Christ, the Lord, the Son of God, was born of the Father before the

ages, let him be anathema.' All shouted, 'Let him be anathema.' 'If any one denies that the Son resembles the Father according to the Scriptures, let him be anathema.' All replied, 'Let him be anathema.' 'If any one shall deny that the Son of God was for ever with the Father, let him be anathema.' All shouted, 'Let him be anathema.' 'If any one shall say that the Son of God is a creature, as are other creatures, let him be anathema.' It was similarly said, 'Let him be anathema.' 'If any one shall say that the Son is out of nothing, and not of God the Father, let him be anathema.' All exclaimed, 'Let him be anathema.' 'If any one shall say there was a time when the Son was not, let him be anathema.' During these proceedings, all the bishops and the whole Church were in a species of ecstasy at the words of Valens."

At this part of the story, the writer seems to have entertained some doubt whether such intolerable nonsense could be credited; and he therefore inserts, — "If any one thinks this account a fable, let him examine the public archives. The Church chests are full, and the memory of the events is still recent. There are men now alive [it was only nineteen years ago, according to the assumed date of this tract] who were present; and, what is more, the Arians themselves do not deny its truth."

This, as a matter of course, is conclusive; and he starts afresh:—

"When all were extolling Valens to the skies,

and regretting their previous suspicions of him, Claudius again rose, and said, — ‘There are yet some statements which have escaped my lord and brother, Valens, which, if it be your pleasure, that no suspicion may remain, we will condemn in a body. If any one shall say that the Son of God was before indeed all ages, but not so as that there was not a precedent time, let him be anathema.’ All said, ‘Let him be anathema.’ There were many other things which Valens, at the instigation of Claudius, condemned, which, if any one wishes to see, he may find in the acts of the Council of Rimini, whence we have extracted this account.”

Such a statement as this is a barefaced fabrication; but it is fully equalled by what follows. He represents the recreant bishops who had signed the Arian Creed at Rimini as coming, on the recall of the exiles by Julian, with “tears in their eyes, and protesting by the body of our Lord, and by whatever else the Church counted holy, that they never suspected any trick in the creed. ‘We thought,’ they are represented as saying, ‘that the sense agreed with the words. We never dreamed that in the Church of God, where there is simplicity and a pure confession, there would be one thing in the heart and another on the lips. A too good opinion of evil men has deceived us. We never thought that Christ’s bishops would be found fighting against Christ.’” Poor innocents! our own tears trickle down in sympathy. They

must have been very simple, indeed, to have gained no experience from the last twenty years. But if so, what had made them then anathematise *this very creed* at Rimini, and depose their friend Valens only a month or two back?

But this is not the only curiosity. There is another, equally well vouched, which appears in this treatise. Jerome tells his Luciferian opponent, who seems to have been as simple as the Rimini prelates, that Arius, and Euzoius, and Achillas, the three authors of the heresy, signed the Homousian Creed at the Council of Nice; and when he finds him rather startled at the intelligence, assures him that there are men yet living who were present at the synod [fifty years back at the lowest possible computation], who will tell him so. "And if that does not satisfy you, because, on account of the distance of time, they are now very scarce, and cannot be found in every place testifying to the fact, read the acts and names of the bishops of the Nicene Council, and you will find that Arius and the other leaders of the heresy were all received, and that they all subscribed homooousion."

Nothing more need be said to condemn in a moment a treatise that contains such absurd statements as these. They are not the only novelties it contains; and his argument, if I understand it, is a contradiction.

In this tract a letter of Cyprian to Stephen is named and quoted; and Lucifer's ordination of

Paulinus to the see of Antioch is alluded to. Birds of a feather flock together.

But there was one individual in the fourth century who had possessed himself of these letters, and knew them thoroughly. In fact he overplayed his part. He evidently wrote his letters to tell us how much he delighted in "my Cyprian" as he calls him. And who is he? On the titlepage is the name of Pacian; and on referring to Jerome, who is here perhaps unpolluted, we read:—"Pacian, bishop of Barcelona, in the Pyrenees, celebrated for his chastity and eloquence, for his way of life and speech, wrote several small works, one called *Κέρεος*, and another against the Novatians. He is already dead, in extreme old age, in the reign of Theodosius;" that is, within twelve years of the time Jerome was writing.

The work to which I am alluding is said to be this book against the Novatians. But I have learnt to believe, and I think the reader will be convinced also if he has the patience to weigh my proofs, that attention is to be paid to the titles of the books which Jerome quotes. My impression is, that he had seen every book which he mentions, except in cases where he distinctly tells us that he had not; and that he, whatever may have been the case with his interpolator, was very exact in transcribing the titles. But the book in question has no such title as "against the Novatians;" it is intitled, "Three Letters to Sympronian." There is nothing to show that the writer was Pacian, nor where he lived, nor

to whom he was writing; and the internal evidence is, that the writer was an African. It is a very absurd story that introduces the Cyprian documents. The parties are strangers, or almost so, and live thirty days' journey apart; and Sympronian, whom Pacian addresses as "my lord," "most illustrious lord," and then "brother," sends a messenger with his letters to Pacian, telling him that no one throughout the whole world had convinced him of the error of his opinions; but yet seeking to argue with Pacian. As it turns out, however, (and if this letter is a specimen of his usual method of conducting a controversy, there is not much wonder that he had yet been unanswered,) he had forgotten, although he had sent a man a month's journey with his letter, to state distinctly what his opinions were. So Pacian, in the first letter, argues as if his correspondent was a Montanist, introducing Cyprian however; and, after a few observations, says he would have entered more at large into the subject, only (as usual) the servant was waiting. This is a very significant excuse, as it pervades so many of these suspicious documents. But as a thirty days' journey lay between him and his correspondent (although Pacian carefully conceals the place of Sympronian's residence, calling it "the city"), it might have been thought that the messenger could have waited a day longer. At the same time, if the messenger had waited for the first letter as long as it would seem he had to wait for the second, forty days,

he might have some reason for being in a great hurry at last.

The second and third letters are evidently intended to bolster up the Cyprian letters, by quoting the peculiar facts contained in them, such as the name, character, and proceedings of Novatus, the African presbyter, under pretence of warding off the attacks of a Novatian. It is impossible that Pacian's character for learning could have induced a stranger to send so far to hear the truth from his lips. A man who proves that "Catholic" means, "as the more learned think, 'obedience to all the commands,' that is, 'of God,' by the text, 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,'" is not likely to have been the subject of fame, or to have received Jerome's panegyric. The allusion to the Apollinarians as well-known heretics, classing them among the Phrygians and Novatians, of itself is a fair presumption that Pacian was not the author of the letters. He died in extreme old age, about the time when that heresy was first condemned in the East, its birthplace; and it is very unlikely, even if the heresy had penetrated the Pyrenees, that a man of his years, and he does not write like an old man, would have been at that time writing a book; or if he had been, and had noticed the new heresy, that he would not have said something about its peculiar tenets.

These are the only authorities for the existence

of these letters, known (for so I interpret the words of Jerome) wherever the rays of the sun fall, for one hundred and fifty years after they are said to have been written. And the reader must remember that I by no means say they were well known, or known at all, even then. For several reasons I postpone to another volume what I have to say upon the writings of Augustine.

But before I conclude this inquiry into the external evidence, I have another fact to relate, very fatal, in my opinion, to the character for genuineness of these letters. It has been shown that they appear, and most suspiciously, where it could not have been expected. It can also be shown that they do not appear where their absence is equally unsatisfactory. Optatus, bishop of Milevi, in Africa, wrote a work in six books* against the Donatists, in the reigns of Valentinian and Valens, that is, between A.D. 364—375. One of the greatest complaints which the Catholics had against the Donatists was, that they re-baptized Catholics going over to them. It was the insult of a sect. Optatus devotes one of the books of his work to this subject. Now, in the fifth century, we are told that the Donatists very much relied on the authority of Cyprian for a justification of this practice, which was very natural for them to do. It was a case in point; and such an au-

* Seven have descended to us.

thority was a tower of strength to any party. Augustine is therefore seen refuting two of his compositions sentence by sentence. But if this was the state of the controversy in the fifth century, it could not have been otherwise thirty or forty years earlier. The Donatists must have been equally aware of these letters, and equally have valued them in the days of Optatus as in the days of Augustine. Yet it is a very remarkable fact, that Cyprian's authority is never once alluded to in this work of Optatus. It has been grievously tampered with, in the two first books, to support Peter's chair, and Cyprian's name is introduced in connection with that fable. But there is not the slightest notice of his letters on rebaptism; which induces the very natural conclusion, that, at that period, neither Donatist (as Optatus's work is a reply to the Donatist bishop of Carthage) nor Catholic had ever heard of them; and Carthage was the place of their birth. I view this fact as very conclusive evidence against their previous existence.

Having now arrived at the close of the examination into these letters of Cyprian, I ask the reader to review what has been said, and I think that when he has recalled to his mind that, previous to A.D. 250, nothing (with one exception, and that is presumed to be equally spurious) is known of any connection between the Roman and the other Churches; and that, all at once, these Churches are found, some of them in constant and almost

daily intercourse; that Africa and Alexandria are represented like Roman offshoots; that nothing is done, especially in Africa, but information of it is immediately sent to Rome; that the people of Rome, Africa, and Alexandria seem almost one Church; and that, after the short space of eight years, all in a moment is again as silent as the grave, and so continues till nearly two centuries have expired; and when he has also remembered the suspicious contents of the Cyprianic letters, which profess to have been written during these eight years, all tending to show the supremacy of the Roman see; and when he further considers the spurious additions or interpolations in the historical documents, all manifestly introduced to support them, as if they needed authority; and that in the course of nearly two centuries after their date only two works are known, and they to all appearance spurious, in which the contents of the Cyprianic letters are to be found; while on the other hand there is no mention of them in the book of Optatus, where, if genuine, we are morally certain they must have appeared, he will feel with me, I think, that they are not only fairly open to the greatest possible suspicion, but that they cannot be supported.

There is yet, however, one more argument to be brought against them; and, if true, a most conclusive one. These letters consist of one from Novatian, two from the Roman clergy, two from Cornelius the Roman bishop, one from Celeri-

nus, a Roman confessor, and a reply of Lucian to Celerinus; one from the Roman Confessors; one from Caldonius, bishop in Africa; one from Felix and others (Africans); one from Firmilian, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; one from Lucius and others (Africans), one from Nemesianus and others (Africans), and the rest from Cyprian himself to various persons: that is to say, there are twelve different writers, and they belong to three different parts of the globe, Italy, Africa, and Asia Minor. Yet I will venture any character for acuteness that the reader may kindly attribute to me, upon the truth of the following statement,—that all the letters were written by one and the same individual, although some two or three are a little disguised. They all contain, as far as their special subject allows them, the same sentiments, they are written in the same language, adopt the same phrases, and even possess the same lingual peculiarities. I challenge the closest investigation. I have analysed them thoroughly; and the more I have sifted them, the more I have been convinced. And in addition to this (which may be called the external part of the internal evidence afforded by the letters themselves) I must add, that no parties concerned in a real correspondence of this character could have written such unreal letters.

At the time when the Cyprianic letters remove the curtain, and show such busy doings between Rome and Carthage, the history of Eusebius would lead us to suppose that similar passings and

repassings were taking place in the Mediterranean between Rome and Alexandria. It is very singular, certainly, but so it is. There is no end of letter writing just at that time. As a fitting termination to this Novatian series, I will present a part of the contents of a presumed letter of Cornelius to Fabian, bishop of Antioch, and of another from Dionysius, of Alexandria, to Stephen.

According to Eusebius's "Church History,"* Cornelius told Fabian of the very great Roman synod, of the Italian and African synods, and of the synods held in the other Western provinces, which, however, are not named. To prevent any doubt being felt of the reality of these synods, Eusebius tells us that Cornelius had appended to his letter the names of all the bishops who had attended his synod, and the names of their sees. Not only so, but the names of all the other bishops who, not being present at Rome, had yet assented to its decree, with the names of their sees; which implies that all the other synods had, like the African, sent their synodal letters to Cornelius. At the same time, how Cornelius could have obtained the knowledge of the African sees, and what enabled him to appropriate the right see to the right bishop, is not clear; as, judging from the synodal letters extant from that Church, it was not their custom to add their sees to their names. They ran in this way—"Thomas, James, William, Philip, another James, George, another Thomas,

* vi. 33.

&c., to brother Cornelius.” Even with the help of the court roll, with which Cyprian had been so kind as to furnish Cornelius, it must have been impossible to distinguish the duplicate Jameses and Thomases. But be that as it may, Cornelius is said to have sent a list, (which must greatly have edified the bishop of Antioch, who had, probably, never heard of any Western see beside Rome,) of all the Western prelates, from all the provinces of Gaul, Spain, Africa, and Italy; and after all this trouble (though, to be sure, we do not see the list, and Eusebius, except in peculiar cases like the present, is very particular in noting such facts) we must be very sceptical indeed if we doubt about the matter.

Now let us turn to Dionysius.* In this story, Fabian, the bishop of Antioch, is assumed to have been inclined to patronise Novatian; but as Novatian is nowhere said to have had any followers about Antioch, or those parts, it was necessary soon to put an end to the schism; and, therefore, Dionysius is introduced as writing to Stephen to say, that all the prelates, everywhere, were rejoicing in unexpected peace and unity; that Demetrian at Antioch (Fabian being dead), Theoclistus in Cæsarea, Mazabanes in Œlia, Marinus in Tyre (Alexander being dead), Heliodorus in Laodicea (on the death of Thelymidrus), Helenus in Tarsus, and all the Churches of Cilicia, Firmilian and all Cappadocia (he only named the more noted

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vii. 5.

prelates, not to be tedious), also all the Syrias and “Arabia, which you are always assisting, and to whom you are now writing, and Mesopotamia, Pontus, and Bithynia, and in short all, were praising God everywhere for their unity and brotherly love.”

Let us now look at what these statements imply. They imply, certainly, that in the West nothing else could well have been talked about during the year or years of synods, but Novatian, and that the Western bishops must have been in very considerable excitement and motion throughout the different provinces. Nothing that had yet occurred in the Church had at all equalled it. But the same, and even worse, must have been occurring in the East. There was fearful disunion in those countries. We are told that, from the Hellespont to Egypt, there was but one scene of contention. Synods were held in every part of Asia Minor: at Antioch, in Palestine, in Arabia, Mesopotamia, and other places now unknown; for Dionysius, although gifted with great epistolary powers, is tired of enumerating them. And as the bishops had, from being disunited, become united, there must, I think, have been not only particular synods, but some one grand synod of a most comprehensive kind, at which, to their great astonishment and delight, they had recovered their unity; that is (for so vague is the statement, it is disputed), they had unanimously rejected the tenets of Novatian.

Now let the reader look at both East and West,

and see the wide compass of these most extraordinary commotions. What a subject for the Church historian! It would have formed a book of itself. Will it be believed that Eusebius has not said one word about them, although the letters containing these wonderful accounts are to be seen in his history? There is no proof that he knew any thing of their contents. In fact, his silence implies that he did not, and that they were inserted by others. He could not have been silent if he had inserted them himself. And in his "Chronicle" at this period all that is seen, if indeed it was seen, is "A.D. 255, Novatus the heresiarch, a presbyter of Rome, is celebrated." There is not the slightest mention of these synods, or of these disturbances. Even the Latin, which is altered to suit the Cyprianic letters by the introduction of a Novatus, a supposed presbyter of Cyprian's, is silent. It can, I think, scarcely be doubted that the letters are insertions, of which both Eusebius and Jerome were utterly ignorant, else they would have alluded to them. The pseudo-Jerome only says, "Novatus, a presbyter of Cyprian, coming to Rome, forms a party with Novatian and the other Confessors, because Cornelius would receive the penitent apostates." Eusebius tells us of the accession of Demetrian, bishop of Antioch, whose predecessor was the supposed originator of the Eastern tumults, of the accession of Cornelius, Lucius, and Stephen, bishops of Rome, in whose episcopates these events were occurring; but not a word is there of these most extraordinary and stirring scenes, which were

coeval with the illustrious writer's birth. I ask the reader to look on this picture and on that, and to observe how every thing seems to confirm the view which I am taking of the forgery of these various documents. If any doubt remained, the extract from the letter of Dionysius would, I think, remove it. It was inserted to represent the bishop of Alexandria reporting the state of the East to the bishop of Rome as an evidence of the constant intercourse between Rome and the East; and the constant recurrence to that see, not only from Africa and the West, but also from Alexandria and the East. And this is quietly and unobtrusively confirmed by the following statement:— Among the lately disunited, but now united, regions was Arabia, “which,” says Dionysius, “you are *always* assisting, and to whom you are *now* writing.” It was so natural for Dionysius (although it is very curious how he got to know them) at Alexandria to inform Stephen at Rome of these facts. And the archives of Rome, which contain so many curious documents, to have retained no copy of these letters, how unfortunate!

No. II. STEPHEN.

It has been said that the Cyprianic letters introduce a controversy between the bishop of Rome and the bishops of Africa and Asia Minor on the

question whether heretical baptism should be regarded as valid or not. They state that the bishop of Rome admitted it, ordering that all those who came to the Church from heresy should be received with only imposition of hands; while the African and Asiatic bishops insisted upon their being baptized in the Church. As the latter would not obey the order of the Roman prelate, he excommunicated if not the African, certainly a large portion of the Asiatic Churches. Such is the story.

If the reader shall have come to the same conclusion as myself, that all the letters in Cyprian's volume are spurious, nay, that it is extremely doubtful whether there ever was such a person; then the letter of Firmilian, giving an account of his own excommunication and that of the Churches of Asia Minor, will perish along with them; and any further notice of Stephen's proceedings may seem unnecessary.

There are only two records of this excommunication. The spurious letter of Firmilian, and a letter of Dionysius of Alexandria (inserted in Eusebius's "Church History"), which communicates to Sixtus II. (Stephen's successor) a saying of Stephen, that he should excommunicate the further part of Asia Minor; and that he, Dionysius, had prayed him not to do so, as he would be also excommunicating the other half, which held the same views. But if Eusebius really knew of this letter, now to be seen in his "History," it is very extraordinary that his "Chronicle" should contain no notice of its contents; that it should be utterly

silent about this excommunication, as it is about Victor's; and that posterity also should have known nothing of either. There are no events of the ante-Nicene period to be compared with them in importance if they be true. On their truth or falsehood rests the independence of the Churches.

The actual excommunication is only learned from Firmilian's letter; and as neither this letter nor its contents are at all alluded to in the "Book on Ecclesiastical Writers," there can be little doubt that it was written after that book had been interpolated; and that the excommunication of Asia Minor was a later thought. Neither Stephen nor Firmilian are introduced in the book as authors.

If the reader will attend to the manner in which the extract containing the account of this excommunication is represented to have been introduced by Eusebius in his "Church History," it will, I think, convince him that nothing can be more improbable. But before I give it, I will adduce an additional proof of the tampering which has taken place.

If we turn to the seventh book of Ruffinus's translation of the "Ecclesiastical History" we read, "While Cornelius was bishop of Rome, and Cyprian bishop of Carthage, both distinguished for their faith, virtue, and piety, a question arose, more particularly in Africa, whether heretics should be rebaptized. Cyprian and the Africans decreed that they ought. Cornelius and the Italians, still, however, preserving union with the Africans, decreed the contrary, believing that they ought to

keep the custom handed down from the Fathers ; which was, that, after the rejection of their heresy, and the confession of the truth, they should be received by imposition of hands." But if we look into the history of which this is the translation, we find a very different story ; namely, that "Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, was the first, at that time, to require heretics to be rebaptized ; but Stephen, thinking that there ought to be no innovation, was very angry." There is no mention of Cornelius, in the Greek original, in connection with any controversy with Cyprian ; and Ruffinus's account is not a mere mistake in a name. It is a different statement of fact altogether, opposing the Cyprianic letters to the teeth. But this is not the only discrepancy in a translation remarkable elsewhere for its accuracy. A little further on in the Greek Eusebius *, Stephen is supposed to be writing to some one concerning Firmilian and Helenus, that he would not communicate with them ; but Ruffinus states that he was writing to Firmilian and Helenus that no one should communicate with those who rebaptize heretics ; and the statement proceeds so confusedly as apparently to indicate that an interpolation had taken place. From the general accuracy of this translation, I have no doubt but the manuscripts differed. Both were fable, but fable wanting unanimity.

To return, however, to the Eusebian notice of Stephen's excommunication of Asia Minor, in

* Hist. Eccl. vii. 5.

order that we may see how improbable it is that he should have inserted it. It is thus:—"Dionysius addressed his second letter on baptism to Sixtus II., which points out the *judgment* of Stephen and the other bishops." Who, I ask, from such a preface, would have imagined what was to follow?

"He [Stephen] had written respecting Helenus and Firmilian [as usual, no sees mentioned], and all [no one knows what] in Cilicia, Cappadocia, and Galatia, and all the bordering nations, that he should no longer communicate with them, because, as he says, they rebaptize heretics. And see the magnitude of the matter. There have been very large synods of bishops [in Proconsular Asia], as I hear, who have passed similar decrees; and, in behalf of all these, I wrote and begged of him not to do so."

On this letter Eusebius has not a note or a comment.

I also ask the reader to look at the magnitude of the matter. It was the excommunication of the whole of Asia Minor; either a punishment, or an insult, which would have shaken the East to its centre. And Eusebius is made to introduce it with a few words, not even describing it by name; in fact, as if his extract related to some trifling difference of opinion, adding, at the close of the letter, "So much for this controversy."

As none of these extraordinary events are mentioned in his "*Chronicle*," common sense seems to assure us that Eusebius had never seen this letter

(it is very unlikely to have been passed unnoticed); and that it, like many other things, has been inserted into his "*History*" since his day. The two stories of Firmilian and Victor, detailed in his "*Church History*," are apparently written by the same pen. The language and manner, as far as they could be, are the same.

Add to this the spurious character of Firmilian's letter to Cyprian, the utter silence on such an imperious proceeding maintained by their contemporaries and by posterity, and no doubt, I think, can justly be felt but the whole story is a fabrication.

DS 11.117

No. III. DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA.

THERE is a story about the two Dionysiuses of Rome and Alexandria to the following effect. It is given by piecemeal in three works attributed to Athanasius, one being briefly designated, "On the Opinion of Dionysius, the Bishop of Alexandria," another, "On the Decrees of the Nicene Council," and a third, "On Synods;" and all of them written by the same individual. They assume that Dionysius of Alexandria had been charged with holding Arian tenets; and one of them is apparently written to prove that he had been falsely charged. It is a common saying, "Save me from my friends, and I will protect myself from my enemies;" and Dionysius might well have used it. But for this "de-

fence," I believe that we should never have known of his indiscretion. But whether the Alexandrian Dionysius was guilty of this heretical language or no, is not the part of the story with which I have to do. It is the consequences of it. Athanasius states that some bishops residing in the Pentapolis had, in the days of Dionysius, so imbibed the tenets of Sabellius, that the Son of God was scarcely preached in the Churches. When this had come to the ears of Dionysius, he sent and exhorted the heretics to relinquish their heresies. This they refused to do. He then felt it his duty to write a book against them. It might have been thought, that, as archbishop of the province, he had a readier and more conclusive mode of stopping the further propagation of such teaching. However, in the work which he composed, in order to refute their Sabellian notions, he pointed out the humanity of the Saviour, and showed that it was not the Father, but the Son, who had become incarnate for our salvation. This letter, when read by some of the Pentapolitans, seemed to them to savour of heresy; and not only to distinguish the Persons, but the substance also, of the Father and the Son. And "without," Athanasius says, "going to Dionysius to ask him to explain his meaning, they set off immediately to Rome to the other Dionysius, and laid an accusation against his Alexandrian namesake." Dionysius of Rome summoned a council, and laid the matter before it. The council was highly indignant, and the Roman prelate wrote to his Alexandrian namesake to inform him of the accusation

made against him, and of the synod's opinion. He also published a work against, not only his tenets, but those of Sabellius also. When this letter reached the Alexandrian Dionysius, he was greatly shocked, and immediately wrote an apologetic letter to his Roman namesake.

This is the story; and it is easy to see the object of it. It was intended to show that persons living within the diocese of Alexandria, suspecting their bishop's orthodoxy, went instantly to Rome, and laid an accusation against him; and that the Alexandrian prelate had to exculpate himself to the Roman prelate. We have already seen attempts to assert this superiority with reference to Africa, Gaul, Spain, and Asia Minor. The Alexandrian prelate is now brought within the same circle. Hitherto he has been introduced as asking advice and communicating information. Now he is a criminal.

But this story will, on inquiry, doubly fall. It will fall first with the Athanasian historical documents. If they cannot be sustained, the documents containing the statements out of which this story is composed will fall with them. They are evidently the work of the same writer. But it will fall, I think, also independently.

The "Book on Ecclesiastical Writers" and the translation by Jerome of the "Chronicle" of Eusebius were, in my view, interpolated prior to the concoction of the Sardican Council. There is no allusion to that council in either of them, although it is said to have been held A. D. 347, and they were

respectively composed about A.D. 380 and A.D. 392. Therefore, any statement which depends upon what I may call these Sardican documents, ought not to be found in these works of Jerome; and this story is a striking exemplification and support of my conjecture. There is mention of a letter to Dionysius, bishop of Rome, in the "Book on Ecclesiastical Writers;" but that is nothing. At this period, Dionysius is writing every week to Rome, either to a bishop or a presbyter. The important part is, that the contents of the letter are not named, which could hardly have failed to have been the case had it contained any defence of so important a charge of heresy against such a party. But what is more conclusive is, that Dionysius, the Roman prelate, is not named in these works as a writer. Victor could be named, Cornelius could be named, although their alleged productions are only letters; but Dionysius, bishop of Rome, the author of an important book affecting the orthodoxy of the Alexandrian prelate, and a portion of an important controversy is omitted, and his book, as might be expected, is lost. The fact is, that the idea of this forgery had not arisen when Jerome's works were interpolated. But it may be said that an extract of the Roman Dionysius's work is extant. I admit it; but where? Only in one of these spurious treatises published under the name of Athanasius. And it has already been observed by commentators, that the Roman Dionysius had forestalled the language of the Arian controversy; which is, in other words, to say, that

the extract was written after the Arian controversy had begun. This is only an additional confirmation of its forgery. Not only, however, does Jerome never mention Dionysius as an author, but he has nowhere mentioned, among the works attributed to Athanasius, any one of the treatises in which this story of Dionysius is introduced, which is another and a very strong proof, that those treatises did not exist in his day, or in the day of his interpolator. This forgery was clearly a later thought; and it has no support elsewhere. But it may be said, that it is alluded to in the work "On the Holy Spirit" attributed to Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia. When first I read that work carefully, I could not but ask myself, Can this be the production of the pride of the schools of the ancient world? It is evidently a medley, and, I think, by different hands. It contains much that is mischievous, placing tradition on an equal footing with the written word, and much that is unworthy of a man of Basil's reputation.

It is only in the latter half of the work, where he says, "we will return to what was at first intended," that the subject of the Holy Spirit is singly regarded; and then it aims to prove that he is God, and in so many words. In the last chapter but one, where the writer is wishing to prove his case from Church doctors, he names the Roman Dionysius; but, what is very strange indeed, if the doctrinal opinions of the bishops of Rome were held in the same repute then that they are now, he gives no extract from any of his works; but he

quotes some passages of the heretical Dionysius of Alexandria, from this letter of apology to his Roman namesake. This is the only authority for the existence of this story beside Athanasius; and I should not, from its style and contents, believe in the genuineness of the book "On the Holy Spirit," even if I had no other evidence against it. But we have the most clear proof that this work was not written by Basil. His intimate friend, Gregory of Nazianzum, published an oration, or a sort of biography of him, in which he alludes to his work in these terms:—

"Since I have made mention of his theology, and of the powerful effect of his preaching, I will add this account. It may be very useful to many, and prevent their suffering harm through entertaining a wrong impression of him; while it is aimed at the malignant, who seek to shield their own wickedness by casting stigmas on others. He was ready on account of the truth, the union and co-deity of the Holy Trinity, or whatever other word might more clearly express my meaning, not merely to quit his throne, which at the first he was unwilling to ascend, but to endure flight and death, and even the previous pains, and account them gain not danger. He proved this by what he did and suffered. When he was condemned to exile, all he uttered was, a direction to one of his attendants to take the writing tablets and follow. Still he thought it wise, following the counsel of David, to use his words with discretion in the time of trial, until the war of the heretics had ceased, and days

of freedom had arrived. They sought to catch from his lips the word God as applied to the Holy Spirit; which, being true, was regarded as impious by them and their leader, that they might banish him from the city, and possessing his see as a military position for their wickedness, might, as from a lofty stronghold, devastate the remaining churches. But he, by the use of scriptural expressions, and by clear texts having the same meaning, and by the use of syllogistic reasoning, so gained the victory over his opponents, that they could not contend against him, but were tied down by their own words, which was an instance of his dialectic power and ability. The book which he wrote on this subject shows this. The distinct statement that the Spirit was God he withheld for a time; asking of the Spirit himself, and of his companions in the holy war, that they would not blame him for this management, nor for one word lose the whole in that irreligious period. That they suffered no loss by the language being withheld for a while, if, by other words, the same doctrine was taught. Salvation was not in the words, but in the doctrine. That the Jews even would not be rejected if, seeking our communion, they preferred for a while the word Anointed for Christ; while there would have been the greatest injury to the common welfare if his Church had been consigned to the heretics."

If this description of the book which Basil wrote be compared with the one now passing under his name, it will be found that they cannot be the

same. So that, independently of its being such a book as it would have been utterly beneath Basil to have written, it is a different work entirely. This argument, if Basil ever did write a treatise on the Holy Spirit, would hold good whoever might be thought to be the author of the oration, as the book was then extant.

But there is also another curious transaction attached to this late forgery of the Dionysian story. Eusebius, in the Greek chronicles, is represented as allotting nine years to the episcopate of Sixtus II.; but in his "Church History" the time is stated to have been eleven years.* Although it is impossible to speak with precision, it would seem that he thought the deaths of Sixtus II. and Dionysius of Alexandria to have occurred about the same period. This was the opinion of Jerome, who, in his Latin version, places both the deaths in the same year. Neither he nor his interpolator had anticipated this story. In after times, when it had been invented, a little management became necessary. How could a complaint against Dionysius the Alexandrian be made to the Roman Dionysius, and all the events have occurred which are related, when the Alexandrian may have died before the Roman mounted his chair? A Cyprianic letter was composed to remove the difficulty. Instead of allowing Sixtus to live the eleven or even nine years Eusebius and Jerome had given to him, they remove him in two. It must be admitted, however,

* In the Armenian version of the "Chronicle" it is eleven years. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vii. 27.

that every compensation is made to him. He retires from the world in a glorious martyrdom under Valerian. Of course that fact is unknown to Eusebius, Jerome, and his interpolator.

Indeed Cyprian martyrs all his heroes, and at last himself. They all quit this sublunary scene, to speak in the language of the Roman Confessors*, in ecstatic martyrdom.

No. IV. VICTOR.

THAT a bishop of Rome, of the doings of whose ecclesiastical ancestors nothing is known, should (A.D. 192) suddenly arise, and be seen shutting out from Church communion, as far as he was able, some of the most celebrated Churches of the world, comprising not only, as Valois would interpret it, Proconsular Asia, but the whole of Asia and the Churches bordering upon it, for breaking their paschal fast on the fourteenth day of the moon, and not continuing it till the Sunday (a custom which, it is admitted in the story itself,

* They thus write to Cyprian—"Quid enim gloriosius quidve felicius ulli hominum poterit ex divina dignatione contingere, quam inter ipsos carnifices, in ipso interitu confiteri Dominum Deum? quam inter sævientia secularis potestatis varia et exquisita tormenta, etiam extorto et excruciato et excarnificato corpore, Christum Dei filium etsi recedente sed tamen libero spiritu confiteri?" Cyprian is called a "rhetor," I suppose to explain such stuff; but it was forgotten that it had to come from the pen of a suffering Roman confessor.

had been the practice of John and several other of the Apostles) is a deed of such an extraordinary and monstrous character as to exceed belief. Yet if the "Ecclesiastical History" of Eusebius, as it is now in our hands, is a genuine and unadulterated work from his pen, he certainly believed this to be true. The story, as it appears in that history, is this: — The Christians of all Asia, as it is termed by him, broke their paschal fast on the fourteenth day of the moon, whatever day of the week it might be; while the rest of Christendom never heeded the fourteenth day, but carried on their fast to the Sunday.

A controversy is said to have arisen on this difference in usage, and synods to have been everywhere held to determine it, and, among other places, in Palestine, Rome, Pontus, Gaul, and Osroene. Nothing, therefore, more universal can well be imagined. The synodal letters of these councils are represented as being extant in the days of Eusebius, beside some letters from individuals; and they all decreed that on the Sunday, and on no other day in the week, should the paschal fast terminate. It is then said that all these synods having made this decree sent it everywhere. The letter, however, which conveyed the Roman decree, and which was written by Victor the bishop, and sent, it would seem, to Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, conveyed much more than their opinion. It was a word and a blow. In plain terms they were told to meet together in council and change their doings; if they did not do so, and adopt the usages

of the other Churches, they should all be excommunicated. The 24th chapter of the 5th book of Eusebius's "Church History" opens with a portion of the reply of Polycrates.

'We keep the true day, neither adding to, nor subtracting from, what has been handed down to us. In Asia great *στοιχεῖν* repose, which shall be raised in the day of the Lord's appearing, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall raise all the saints; Philip, one of the twelve Apostles, sleeps in Hierapolis, and two of his daughters, who died in old age unmarried; and his third daughter, having walked in the Spirit, rests in Ephesus. Moreover John, who reclined on the bosom of the Lord, who was a priest, having borne *τὸ πέλαιον*, and martyr, and teacher, he sleeps in Ephesus. And also Polycarp in Smyrna, bishop and martyr; and Thrasea, bishop and martyr, from Eumeneia, who sleeps in Smyrna. What need is there to speak of Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who sleeps in Laodicea? and of Papirius the blessed, and Melito the eunuch, who in every thing acted under the influence of the Holy Ghost, who lies in Sardis, awaiting the visitation from Heaven, when he shall be raised from the dead? These, all of them, kept the day of the fourteenth of the pasch according to the Gospel, transgressing in no respect, but following the canon of the faith. Moreover, I also, Polycrates, less than you all, have done so according to the tradition of my relatives, in all whose steps I have walked. Seven of my relations were bishops, I am the eighth; and my relations always kept the day when the people

put away the leaven. I therefore, brethren, having lived sixty-five years in the Lord, and having conferred with the brethren in other countries, and having read through the whole Bible, have no dread of your threatenings. They were better than I who said, 'We ought to fear God rather than men.' "

He then adds: —

"I could make mention of the bishops who are present whom you desired me to convoke; and I have convoked them, whose names, if I write them, are very numerous. Having seen me, they assented to my letter, knowing that I have not acted carelessly through my long life, but have walked always according to the Lord Jesus."

It is then said that Victor, having received this reply, immediately endeavoured to cut off as heterodox, from the common unity, the Churches of all Asia, with the Churches bordering upon it; and published, by letter, that all the brethren in those parts should be utterly excommunicate.

These proceedings, however, were not acceptable to all the bishops; and they, on their part, exhorted Victor to think rather of peace, and brotherly love, and unity. Sharp letters were extant from some of them. Eusebius, however, only selected one, written by Irenæus, in the person of the Gaulish synod. He having given it as his opinion that the paschal fast should not be broken before the Sunday, still respectfully suggested to Victor that he ought not to cut off whole Churches of God for preserving an ancient custom; and, after having

stated something which itself has been quite as much a matter of controversy as the paschal fast, about the existing differences in the mode of keeping the fast, he adds:—

“For not only concerning the day is there a controversy, but also concerning the manner of the fast. Some think they ought to fast one day; others two, others more. Some measure these days by forty hours, day and night. This variety has not its origin in our day, but has existed long before us, having arisen from the careless practice of prelates, who, by foolishness or ignorance, have thus transmitted a custom to posterity. But these, as well as we, have not the less been at peace, and the difference of our fast confirms the unity of our faith.”

To these remarks he adds the following anecdote:—“Amongst these also were the *πρεσβύτεροι* before Soter, who ruled the Church over which you now preside. I mean Anicetus, Pius, Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Sixtus; these neither kept the day, nor permitted those with them to do so: and yet they, none the less, communicated with those who came from the Churches in which it was kept, although the keeping of it was more offensive to those who did not keep it. And neither on account of this difference in manner were any excommunicated; but the presbyters, your predecessors, sent the eucharist to those belonging to the Churches who kept it. And when the blessed Polycarp was in Rome, in the time of Anicetus, although they had some little differences

with each other on other subjects, their peace was not broken, not loving any contention on this point. For neither was Anicetus able to persuade Polycarp not to keep it, since he had always kept it with John, the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the Apostles with whom he had lived; nor did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to keep it, as he said he ought to keep the customs of the presbyters, his predecessors. With these feelings they communicated with each other. And in the church Anicetus conceded the eucharist to Polycarp, that is, out of respect; and they separated in peace. And the whole Church, consisting of parties following both customs, was at peace also."

If the reader reflects upon this account it will strike him as not the least extraordinary part of it, that neither Irenæus nor Polycrates express any doubt as to the power or authority of the Roman bishop to interfere abroad. Irenæus respectfully remonstrates; Polycrates says, "who cares;" but the illegality of any such proceedings is never even hinted at. The prelate could issue his mandate, only there might be then, as now, persons who would disregard it. And yet it is so opposed to every thing that can be guessed at about the Church at that time, that it is, at the first glance, incredible. It appears, however, in the "Ecclesiastical History" of Eusebius. What is to be done? It is much more easy to make a statement than to refute it, particularly when there is a scarcity of cotemporary testimony. But if we examine the evidence on which it rests, I think the story

will win no favour in our eyes. Antiquity knows nothing either of Victor or of his excommunication. East and West equally ignore it. It is only seen in works whose testimony, by having been so frequently adduced in suspicious cases, has lost its weight. On the present occasion the witness scruples at nothing. Jerome was so tickled by the story, that in his "Ecclesiastical Writers" he has, under one head or another, given the whole of it. There is no need to go to Eusebius. We have under "Polycarp" his visit to Soter at Rome, which is said expressly to have been on the paschal question. Under "Irenæus" we have the substance of his letter to Victor, and the cause of it, the excommunication. Under "Polycrates," whose only work this letter is, we have the whole of his letter, *πέταλον* and all. Jerome's reason, too, for the insertion of the letter, viz. to show "the genius and authority of the man," is singular: he made no other insertion for any similar reason, and there was not much scope to show the genius of a man in that letter. We have also under "Victor" a confirmation of his interference, as it is said, "he wrote a work on the pasch;" a fact, which it is strange the Roman Church has never recorded. "Bacchylus," also, is immortalised by a statement purporting that he wrote on the pasch, and Theophilus of Cæsarea also. But although this witness asseverates so strongly the truth of this most extraordinary story, Eusebius had clearly never heard of it. There is not a whisper of it in his "Chronicle," though it was an event of vastly more

importance than any act of man which he has recorded. Even the Jerome translation is only witness to a part. The interpolator was modest on the present occasion, and only says that Victor gave his opinion along with the rest of the prelates.* It is singular that if Jerome knew both parts of the story, and had been so charmed with it as to go so largely into it in his "Book on the Ecclesiastical Writers," that he should make not the slightest mention of the excommunication or controversy with Polycrates, or the deprecatory or angry letter of the bishops in his translation of the "Chronicle." This is suspicious; and so is the total absence of any other testimony for so notorious and extraordinary a proceeding which agitated the Church from one end to the other;—but I will endeavour to show from the story itself, that it is entitled to no credit.

Let us first notice the letter of Irenæus. He had been in early life, according to his own account, a pupil of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. Whatever he states then of the sayings and doings of that distinguished prelate must be regarded as strictly true; it is what he had heard Polycarp say, or what he knew that he had done. There can be no doubt of his own trustworthy character. He was a very able man, and a good man, as his work against the heresies, still extant, testifies. He

* The see-saw and unnatural way in which he describes these synods is singular. First Palestine in the East, then Rome in the West, then Pontus in the East, then Gaul in the far West, and then Osroene in the far East.

wrote that work, if he is the author of the 3rd chapter in the 3rd book, in the days of Eleutherus, A.D. 177—193. Born in the East, his work shows he must have lived there a long time. The information it contains could not have been obtained in the West,—not even in Rome, the congenial resort of heretics. He is found at length on the banks of the Rhone; but how he got there, or when he went, is unknown. If any reliance could be placed on a letter from some Gaulish martyrs to Eleutherus, Irenæus had not been at Rome before the year A.D. 177; and as he is said to have been made bishop of Lyons in that year, it is probable he never had been there at all. The knowledge, therefore, which he displays in his letter to Victor, of the proceedings of five of Victor's predecessors in the paschal controversy is remarkable. He tells Victor the behaviour of Anicetus, Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, and Sixtus, back to A.D. 119; that is, within twenty years of St. John's death; and praises Sixtus with the rest for not having excommunicated the Asiatics of those days, for continuing to celebrate the paschal fast in the manner they had been used to do, when that apostle and several others were with them. This is more than curious.

Again: observe what is said about Polycarp. He states distinctly that Polycarp had kept the 14th day of the moon with St. John and the rest of the Apostles with whom he had lived. This implies at least that he had lived with three or four of the Apostles, and that they were Quartodecimans.

I do not think that we can spare Peter or Paul from the number. This account is confirmed by his book on the "Heresies" (if the 3rd chapter of the 3rd book, which certainly has no similitude in any other part of his large work, be genuine), where he distinctly says that Polycarp had been a disciple of Apostles, and an intimate of many who had seen Christ; and this is the very same language that he uses in the same chapter, of Clement. We are therefore entitled to conclude that, in his view, they were cotemporaries. He also tells us, in the same chapter, that Polycarp was ordained by Apostles to the see of Smyrna. How many there were we cannot say; but as he had lived with at least three or four of them, perhaps more, we may suppose that these three or four were concerned in his appointment: there must at least have been two. Now I put it to the reader, whether it is not fair and natural to suppose that Polycarp could not have been born much later than about A. D. 40, to satisfy (not possibly, but probably) all these statements. He had been intimate with at least three or four of the Apostles, and with many who had seen Christ; which means, who had attended on his teaching. When we reflect that the days of our age are threescore years and ten, and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone,—if out of the few who had attended Christ's teaching he had been intimate with many,—if out of his eleven Apostles he had been intimate with at least

three or four,—if he had been ordained bishop of Smyrna by at least two,—if the same language is used of him as of Clement, who is said to be mentioned by St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians, written between A.D. 58—65; if all this be true, it is a fair and reasonable supposition that he was born not much later than A.D. 40.

This date can be confirmed. Irenæus, in that chapter in the book against “Heresies,” says that Polycarp wrote to the Philippians; and he gives extracts from the letter which show the one now extant is the one Irenæus possessed; and it clearly refers to the one which Ignatius is said to have written to Polycarp from Philippi. In Ignatius’s letter he requests Polycarp to summon a council at Smyrna, and elect and consecrate a bishop for the Church of Antioch, and send him to that city.* But Ignatius had been consecrated to the see of Antioch A.D. 70, and it is quite clear that Polycarp, with such a commission, must have been a person of uncommon character and fame, and long standing in the Church; and this letter was written A.D. 108. Irenæus, therefore, must clearly have regarded Polycarp’s birth as very early.

But we have another proof of it. In this same chapter of his work against the “Heresies,” he says of Polycarp, “whom we also saw in our early youth, for he continued for a long while,

* It would have been amusing to have seen the countenances of Heros and the Church at Antioch, on the arrival of the episcopal stranger. As Antioch was the focus of order, his canonical ordination would have excited some curious inquiry.

and was very old, and died having achieved a glorious martyrdom;" which means, that Polycarp died in the early youth of Irenæus; and in his letter* to Florinus, Irenæus fixes the period. He states that when a boy, and with Polycarp in Lower Asia, he had seen Florinus (a Roman presbyter who had been excommunicated for heresy) flourishing in the imperial court, and seeking to ingratiate himself with Polycarp. The natural interpretation of that language is, that the court was at that time in Lower Asia; and there is a support to such a statement, since the emperor Adrian, between A.D. 124—130, according to the chronicles, was very frequently in Asia; and whether the emperor had been, at the time to which Irenæus alludes, at Smyrna, or in some other of the Asiatic cities, while Florinus might be on some mission at Smyrna, the expression would in either case hold good. And at that time Polycarp would certainly be very old (having continued a long while); that is, on our supposition, he would be between eighty and ninety years of age.

So far all the information which we can collect seems to coincide. Now the time at which Irenæus was writing this book is said † to be the episcopate of Eleutherus; that is, between A.D. 178—194. Suppose the period be divided, and it be thought he was writing A.D. 186. He might be supposed then to be somewhere about seventy years of age. The book was not written by Irenæus in his youth, we

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. v. 20.

† Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 3.

may be sure of that, from the information it contains, as well as from his designation of Papias, an intimate of Polycarp, as ἀρχαῖος ἀνὴρ.* But now comes the difficulty. Irenæus, when speaking in the book against "Heresies" of his intimacy with Polycarp, seems to meet an objection of his reader, as if he had heard him say, "You! you see Polycarp! impossible; he was dead long before you were born." "No," replies Irenæus, "I was a boy, and he was very old; for he continued a long while:" from which language there is a natural inference that he had died soon afterwards while Irenæus was a boy. But how could Irenæus have imagined that such an objection would occur to his reader, or how could he have met it in that way if he had known (as he is made to say), that this very old man had not only not died at that period, but had been so brisk and lively as, between thirty and forty years afterwards, to have gone from Smyrna to Rome and back again, to have a little conversation with Anicetus, whose episcopate ranges between A.D. 160—170, about the paschal fast, and some other matters in dispute? How could Irenæus have talked of the successors to Polycarp teaching the same doctrine that Polycarp had taught even to his day?—language which seems at least to require forty or fifty years to justify it; when he knew that Polycarp had suffered martyrdom A.D. 169, possibly within ten years of his composing his book. My conclusion therefore is,

* Iren. adv. Hær. v. 31.

especially as there is no record in antiquity of any extravagant age of Polycarp, that this story of Polycarp is as a whole incredible, and that there has been some tampering or fabrication. It is not my particular business to sift the wheat from the chaff; my only object at present is to inquire into the authority of the story. If one part of the letter to Victor is a palpable fable, the other portion deprecating his excommunication of the Orientals falls along with it; and the unsupported excommunication, in itself most suspicious and incredible on other grounds, will share the same fate.* Before, however, I leave this portion of the inquiry I will add, although I have learnt to place very little confidence in statements in *Martyrdoms and Lives of the Saints*, that the account of Polycarp's martyrdom makes him say to the proconsul, who required him to blaspheme Christ, "eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has never injured me."† These words were meant, I believe, to express his age; and it is stated that the proconsul's name was Statius Quadratus. In the year 142, L. Statius Quadratus was consul.

* My belief is, that this story has no support from the Eusebian "Chronicle," and that the addition of Polycarp's journey to Rome was made by George Syncellus, or some one before him, from the Eusebian "History." In this present case, he was extracting from Eusebius a number of notices of prelates; and between Anicetus and the next, I believe was inserted, "during this episcopate, Polycarp coming to Rome, converted many from heresy."

† Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iv. 15.

But this story of Polycarp and Anicetus contains another statement that requires consideration. Not only does Irenæus say that St. John kept the fourteenth day of the moon, but also that the rest of the Apostles, with whom Polycarp was on terms of intimacy, did the same. As I have said, I do not see how we can except St. Peter and St. Paul. Both preached in Asia Minor, and St. Paul especially must be appropriated. He had resided in Ephesus, the city of St. John, between two and three years; he watched over it for a long period; and when he left it he confided it to Timothy. Then came St. John. We cannot suppose any change of custom in the Ephesian Church on such a usage. The days for celebrating the most important and affecting events in the history of Christianity could not have been altered in such a descent. If, therefore, St. John kept the fourteenth day of the moon, we may be sure that St. Paul did. We shall feel no difficulty in believing that St. Peter did. But if St. John and the rest of the Apostles, with whom Polycarp associated (by which must be meant all those who laboured in Asia Minor, that is, all who did not go into the far East), kept the fourteenth day, how happens it that all the other Churches of Christendom had a contrary apostolical custom? To this question I see no answer.

But if this question cannot be satisfactorily answered, I would ask another, and I ask the reader's attention to it: What authority have we for talking of any diversity of usage, or any usages at all, among the Apostles on this subject; or for

believing that St. John adopted the day "when the people put away the leaven?" I shall be surprised if he can point out one, except this letter which we are examining, for so incredible an idea as a fixed diversity of usages on such a subject among the Apostles. There is no other original authority; and it is only to be found here and in Jerome's "Book on Ecclesiastical Writers." This part of the story is as much a fabrication as the excommunication of the Asiatic Churches by Victor. I cannot believe that St. Paul would have appointed, or sanctioned, a continuation of the fast till Sunday at Ephesus; and that St. John would have afterwards altered it, reverting to Judaical usages; or that St. Paul, the lover of order and uniformity in the Churches, would have established or sanctioned one practice in Asia Minor and another elsewhere. There is still another difficulty.

It is very unfortunate that, having the choice of so many letters all bearing upon this point, Eusebius did not make some other selection. From whom is this letter? It is written by Irenæus in the name of the brethren in Gaul; in the name of the Churches over which he is supposed to have been bishop; for there is a mystery about him. But in the letter from the two Churches, giving an account of the persecution which they had endured, only one bishop, Pothinus, and Sanctus a deacon are heard of. The Christians, therefore, were probably extremely few even in those cities; and no other Gaulish Churches are known to have existed at that time. Does it not seem, then,

rather strange to hear of a synodal letter at all from this infant community ?

Let us now advert to the former part of the letter. Irenæus is said, by Eusebius, to have expressed his opinion that the fast should be prolonged till Sunday. This is not the least curious part of this story, considering that Irenæus was an Asiatic, and the disciple of the supposed champion of this usage. "But," it may be said, "he had changed his views when he had reached the West." If so, we can hardly doubt that he would have said so in this letter, and given the reasons for his change ; and we really have a right to expect that, if he had, Eusebius would have inserted them, for this account would have been one of the most interesting parts of the story. But nothing is said beyond his support of the general usage.

Eusebius then presents the words of Irenæus to the effect, that not only in the day was there a diversity, but also in the manner of keeping this fast ; and that these different observances arose from those in authority being careless and ignorant, and thus transmitting erroneous usages to posterity. Without inquiring whether this designation applies to the Apostles, which might be argued, I proceed to point out what certainly does apply to them. Irenæus is represented as having respectfully suggested to Victor, in order to soothe his fury, that his predecessors had not excommunicated the Quartodecimans. He does not say that the Quartodecimans had committed no offence ; or that they did not deserve excommunica-

tion; or that it was not Victor's business, or in his power, to excommunicate them. Here he is silent, and only pleads that it would be kind and prudent not to do so. He carries his history back as far as Sixtus; why he stopped there, does not appear. If the Quartodeciman usage was an offence (and it is presumed to have been so, as it is said by the Palestine Council to endanger salvation), the offence existed before Sixtus; and the power of the Roman prelate and the justice of the sentence would have been the same. But, on Irenæus's own statement, it did exist before Sixtus. And who were the offenders? Several of the Apostles, and almost certainly St. Paul, if not also St. Peter. An argument leading to so foolish a conclusion as this must do, on the admission that several of the Apostles were Quartodecimans, or even one, could never have been written by Irenæus. It is far more probable that his name has been made a stalking-horse.

Beside this, an unfortunate word occurs which brings this letter down at least two centuries. I mean the term *κρατεῖν*, applied to bishops.* This

* Massuet, quoting Beveridge, says in his previous Dissertations to his edition of Irenæus, page 88., that *κρατεῖν* never signifies "to rule," without what is ruled be added; and therefore in this place it means "to keep." If he had said that it never means "to keep," without what is kept be added, he would, I think, have been nearer the mark. See Basil's Letters, 66. 68., where *κρατεῖν* is used absolutely for ruling; and in the first instance, I believe, it is applied to the Oriental bishops, although the able and learned editor, Maran, thinks it refers to the Western emperor. As I believe these letters to be spurious as well as this letter of Irenæus, they may have been written about the same period.

use of the word appears in the forged letters of Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, in the fourth century ; but is not seen so early in genuine writings. To say that it here signifies holding the custom is, I submit, a mere evasion of a difficulty. In the first place, it is not Greek ; in the second, why did not Irenæus use again the words *τηρεῖν*, or *ἐπιτηρεῖν*, which he uses so frequently ? and, thirdly, the passage of Tertullian *, with which it is connected, suggests the interpretation of “rule,” and gives no countenance to the translation of “keep.” That word alone speaks, I think, rather conclusively as to the age of the letter.

Let us now turn to the remaining proof of this excommunication. Nothing is known of Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, beyond these extracts from his letter to Victor. I must therefore confine myself to its contents. Singular expressions must be passed by. The man, if he existed, may have been an eccentric sentimentalist, who delighted in figures of speech. In one he has been eminently successful. The *πέταλον*, as applied to St. John, has been quite a riddle to the commentators. What can he mean ? has been their continued cry.

Further ; Polycrates says that Thræsea, bishop

* In the beginning of the treatise, “De Virginibus velandis,”—that virgins should be veiled—he says, “Hoc exigere veritatem cui nemo præscribere potest, non spatium temporis, non *patrocinia personarum*, non privilegium regionum. Ex his enim fere consuetudo, initium ab aliqua ignorantia vel simplicitate sortita, in usum per successionem corroboratur, et ita adversus veritatem vindicatur.”

and martyr from Eumenia, was buried in Smyrna. It happens that, three or four pages previous to this letter, Eusebius is quoting from a letter of Apollonius, an orthodox writer. It was a peculiarity of Eusebius to note down whatever he learned about bishops, martyrs, or writers. In Apollonius's letter* he found the name of Thrasea as a martyr; and that such a fact might not be forgotten, he inserts in his history, "And he mentions one Thrasea, a martyr of those times." It was a practice also of Eusebius, to which he most rigidly adhered, never to introduce a bishop without naming his see; and if so much as a page has intervened since the last mention of his name, again to attach that of his see. If we consider for a moment, this custom must have been as universal as it was necessary. Suppose that I were to speak of bishop Thomas, who could tell which I meant, of the eight prelates whom he would find bearing that name in Gilbert's list? It was quite as indistinct in those days to give only the prelate's name, as it would be now to give the single Christian name of John, Thomas, or William. Of course, comparatively, only a few names of prelates have descended to us, and a great part of those have no duplicates. When we read of Firmilian, or Cyprian, or Victor, we need no further information; we know who is intended. But, even in dealing with the few prelates of antiquity whose names have survived, we need sometimes to have

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. v. 18.

the see mentioned. For instance, when we speak of Dionysius, is the reader to seek him in Rome or Alexandria? Equal, indeed greater, need was there in those days respecting most common names, for there were probably twenty contemporary bishops named Dionysius, and Maximus, Theodorus, &c., men well known, if not of equal celebrity, with those of whom we know, but whose names, from circumstances, are now lost. Every document ought to be regarded with suspicion that fails in these particulars. Judging, therefore, from the constant practice of Eusebius, which is never varied, except in one or two cases, where he is speaking of bishops as writers, I feel satisfied that when Eusebius saw the name of Thrasea in that letter, and inserted it in the way which I have described, he possessed no more information about Thrasea than that which he there gave. Had he, however, seen the letter of Polycrates, he would have known many facts concerning Thrasea, all which would have interested him. He would have learnt that he was a bishop, as well as a martyr, and that his see was Eumenia (although I am in doubt whether ἀπὸ Εὐμενίας was a second century description of a bishop's see, in spite of those two incredible subscriptions to the letter of Serapion, bishop of Antioch).* He would have known also where he was martyred, and where he was buried; facts about which, if all be genuine that is found in his history, he was very curious.

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. v. 19.

As, therefore, Eusebius merely speaks of one Thrasea, a martyr of those days, with no mention of his being a bishop, my belief is that he had never seen the letter of Polycrates, which is inserted almost in the next chapter.

Again; Polycrates describes Melito, bishop of Sardis, as a eunuch. This is a fact which Eusebius nowhere states when speaking of him; a fact, too, which, had it been known to him, would never have been withheld.*

Again; Polycrates says, that "Philip the apostle, and two of his daughters, who died unmarried, were buried at Hierapolis; his third daughter was buried at Ephesus." Eusebius, in another part of his "History," † as it now stands, has also quoted this portion of the letter of Polycrates; and it is very suspicious to see the confusion that exists, without any attempt being made to reconcile it, without its even being noticed by the Chronicler of the world. In the chapter immediately preceding he quotes a passage from Clement of Alexandria, to show that the apostles Peter and Philip were married:—"Peter and Philip had children, and Philip gave his daughters to husbands." In the next chapter he quotes the letter of Polycrates, in which it is said that Philip and two

* This is still more strikingly to be observed in Jerome's "Book on Ecclesiastical Writers." Under the name of "Melito" there is no mention of his being a eunuch. In the account of "Polycrates," the whole letter is inserted; and Melito is there described as a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

† iii. 31.

unmarried daughters were buried in Hierapolis; and the third, without any mention of her condition, buried in Ephesus. He then quotes a passage from Gaius's "Dialogue," which, he says, corroborates the above statement; and it is this — that "the four daughters of Philip the apostle lived in Hierapolis in Asia, and were buried there, as was their father." After this, he finishes by quoting the passage in the Acts, as relating to the apostle (although it distinctly styles him the evangelist), prefacing it by saying that Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, makes mention of the daughters of Philip the evangelist living along with their father at that time in Cæsarea in Judæa, and being endowed with the gift of prophecy, thus, "We entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven, and abode with him; and the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."* I now put it to the reader, whether he can believe that a really extremely learned and acute man, whose habits of research were of the most minute and wearying kind, could have strung together such passages as these, every one differing from the other, and treated them as speaking of one and the same family, the family of the apostle Philip, and as if they were in perfect harmony with each other. And the chapter begins as it ends.

"The time and the manner of the death (τελευτή) of Peter and Paul, and, moreover, the place

* Acts, xxi. 8.

of their burial, has already been pointed out [alluding to a most suspicious statement which will be seen hereafter]. The time also of John's death has been mentioned, and the place of his burial will be learnt from the letter which Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, wrote to Victor, bishop of the Romans: also it tells us of the tombs of Philip the apostle and his daughters."

And after having given the extract, Eusebius adds so much concerning the death (τελευτή) of these.

But it was not for the death that he quoted the passage, but for the *place* of burial. He had accurately made the distinction in the beginning of the chapter.

I will candidly state that I believe not only the letter of Polycrates but the extracts from Gaius to be forgeries; and my impression is the same about the letter of Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, to Soter, which is connected with them.

Polycrates concludes his letter, as will have been seen already, with telling Victor that he had summoned a council as he had desired him, and that the bishops agreed with him; their names, if he were to insert them, he says, were many. But, really, if he had given Victor credit for a grain of reason, he would have felt that the more names he could have forwarded to the Roman prelate, the more likely it was that he would shrink from so violent an act, and he would have inserted them. At the same time, it is obvious that what the bishop would naturally have done was the

very last thing that a forger would do. It would have insured detection (except they were headed like Cyprian's synodal letters), and so the pseudo-Polycrates, more prudent than the pseudo-Cyprian, did not commit himself to names at all. The same caution was exhibited as we have seen in Cornelius's letter to Fabian, bishop of Antioch.

These two letters of Irenæus and Polycrates are the only two original documents on which the excommunication by Victor rests, and my belief is that they are false. With the exception of Jerome's "Book on the Ecclesiastical Writers," neither they, nor Victor, nor his excommunication, are ever named in Christian antiquity. That most startling and atrocious act left no trace behind; and the presuming little Churches of Lyons and Vienne disappear also for a couple of centuries.

No. V. COUNCIL OF ARLES, A.D. 314.

I SHALL summarily state my difficulties in believing in the existence of this Council.

The Council of Arles is not heard of for a century after it is said to have been held, and then it is called a plenary council. It was composed of prelates from Africa, Gaul, Spain, Italy, and even Britain. The emperor Constantine, in his letter to Chrestus, bishop of Syracuse, informs him that

bishops had been summoned from innumerable places to attend it. But if this had been the case, it is difficult to understand why Optatus, an African bishop, writing only half a century after the Council, and endeavouring by all possible means to make a case against the Donatists, should never have alluded to it. It is the more unaccountable, because one of the charges which he is warding off from the Catholics, and throwing back on his opponents, is the appeal to the secular power. It seems impossible, then, to believe that he had heard of this council; and yet it must have been, from its magnitude, so notorious, that it seems equally impossible to believe that, had it taken place, he could have avoided hearing of it.

Again; although Optatus never mentions the council, yet he quotes some expressions of the emperor very much applauded by Romish writers, and contained in the letter which Constantine is represented as having written after the council to the prelates still assembled at Arles, informing them of a further Donatist appeal. In Optatus the expressions are said to have been uttered by the emperor before and after the Roman council. These peculiarities lead to a suspicion that there has been some tampering with the accounts, or, in fact, that no reliance can be placed on the accuracy of the statements.

Again; the letter of the emperor to Chrestus, the Syracusan bishop, is only heard of in the "Ecclesiastical History" of Eusebius; and it is presumed to have been an insertion since the time of

Eusebius, and not to have been even in the copy Ruffinus had before him, as he has not translated it. It is one of several documents relating to Africa, and not in their original language. They are all untranslated by Ruffinus, and there is nothing to prove that Eusebius knew of them. Indeed, the contents of this letter appear to me to furnish sufficient evidence of forgery. An imperial letter, written A.D. 314, is not likely to have styled presbyters persons "of the second throne."

A similar objection applies to the letter of the emperor to Miltiades, bishop of Rome, informing him of the first application of the Donatists. It is inserted (in Greek) in the "Ecclesiastical History" of Eusebius, without note or comment; and is also untranslated by Ruffinus. The emperor's style of writing too is equally suspicious with that in the letter to Chrestus. It is addressed to Miltiades, bishop of Rome, and to Mark; and a sad puzzle that "Mark" has been. Moreover, as Her Majesty, in writing to our Archbishop of Canterbury, informing him that she had sent him a complaint for his investigation, and that some of his colleagues were joined with him, would hardly say, even with reference to the limited number of English prelates, "I have ordered your colleagues, Thomas, and James, and William, to go to Lambeth;" how much more unlikely would it have been for Constantine to have written in such an indefinite manner, when the selection was from the prelates of the Western empire. And yet he did so write if that letter was his com-

position. And we may imagine the bishop of Rome in the mean time looking over the rolls of episcopal names, which, if Cyprian's letters be true, he, as far as respected Africa, had sent to the Roman prelate; and, if he had done so, doubtless all the other primates had done the same; and wondering which of the many Reteciuses, Maternuses, and Marinuses, he would have to entertain at the Lateran.

The presence, too, at the Roman Council of a bishop of Milan with his suffragans, is much more intelligible, if we understand a fabrication of this council in the fifth century rather than an actual occurrence in the beginning of the fourth. As he was not included in the Donatist request (which itself can never have been an original document), and there is no account of the emperor having ordered his attendance, Romish writers conclude that Miltiades summoned him.

And if we look at the acts of the Arles Council forgery is manifest, recollecting its date, A.D. 314. The first canon will not bear investigation:—

“In the first place, on the observation of the Lord's pasch, that we observe it on one day and at the same time throughout the whole world; and that, according to custom, you send letters to all (bishops).”

And if we turn to the letter of the council to Silvester, the Roman prelate, its contents will not remove the doubt that must be immediately felt of the genuineness of any letter, from such a council to the Roman prelate, and more particularly for

the object specified. It notifies its canons to the Roman bishop, that he may, on account of his larger field of jurisdiction, transmit them throughout Christendom. Moreover, if this letter be looked upon as genuine, this is the original; and really we ought to suppose, that in a plenary synod, at which several learned Gauls and Italians were present, there might have been found at that period one who could write Latin not only intelligibly, but with some neatness.

There are still some difficulties of another kind. The council was summoned for the first of August, A.D. 314. The examination of the Donatist complaint would occupy a long or a short time. If short, is it likely that the Archbishop of York would have been summoned to Arles, as the subscriptions lead us to suppose? But, under any circumstances, I do not exactly see how the Donatists, after the council, would be able to reach the emperor (it cannot be thought they were such special favourites as to have a public conveyance assigned to them), and occasion that letter to be sent to the council before he fought the battle of Cibalis in Pannonia, on the eighth day of October. After that battle, few, I think, will imagine it likely that they would have reached him; or that the prelates, to say nothing of the British bishops, would have been content to be staying at Arles making these two-and-twenty canons until his letter arrived, which would be in the next year. If they did, and he on his return found them all

still there, it is not suprising to see, at the end of the council's letter to Silvester — “Tunc tædians jussit omnes ad suas sedes redire. Amen.” It is on these grounds that I suspect this Council.

No. VI. COUNCIL OF SARDICA.

HAVING looked at the documents which relate to Roman interference in Africa, Spain, Gaul, Asia Minor, and Egypt; and having shown, as I trust, that no reliance can be placed upon them, I will now notice the evidence relating to a council which is said to have been held at Sardica in Illyria, A.D. 347.

In the history of the Roman Church it is a most important council. Its antecedents are most important, and its acts are most important. Several canons are stated to have been passed by it, and two of them are the statutory basis of the Roman supremacy. The conduct of the champions of the Roman Church, in respect of these canons, is very significant of their estimation of their prelate's claim to supremacy by divine authority.

As this claim is, generally speaking, of too misty a character to be acceded to by any well informed mind not born in their communion, the Romish advocates are glad to be able to point to any acknow-

ledgment by the Church, no matter how obtained, of a supremacy in the Roman bishop so early as the fourth century. And although, as will be seen in this case, the acknowledgment comes in the shape of a denial of that divine claim, they nevertheless prefer the actual statute to the sickly imagination. The canons supposed to be passed at this council will not be noticed in this volume, their place being in the next century, when they first appear. But I must here insert one of them to enable the reader to form a judgment of it, and to understand why this council and its canons were (as I believe I shall be able to prove) forged by the Roman Church. I am translating from the Latin copy:—

Seventh Canon.

“Bishop Hosius said — ‘It is decreed, that, if a bishop has been accused, and the assembled bishops of that province shall try him, and depose him from his rank; and if the deposed prelate shall appeal, and fly to the bishop of the Roman Church, and desire to be heard, and that prelate shall think that a new trial ought to be given, then let him write to the bishops of a neighbouring and near province [*in finitima et propinqua provincia*], to inquire carefully into the case, and give a just decision. And should the deposed prelate ask the Roman bishop to send one of his presbyters to assist at the trial, that he may do so if he likes; and if he shall think it right to send any pres-

byters to be present at the trial with his authority, he may do so. But if he shall think the bishops able to decide the matter, he will do as he thinks best.' ”

Of course, if there were any original inherent divine authority, this canon is an insulting denial of it, for the Church is clearly conferring a new right. This is seen more clearly still in the third canon, where Hosius, in introducing a similar enactment, prefaces it by saying — “ If it be your pleasure, let us honour the memory of St. Peter the apostle, and refer the appeal of the deposed prelate to the judgment of Julius, bishop of Rome.” But, in these days, the divine claim was not in existence, and the canon was not worded to meet it. The point at that period contended for was an appellat authority over as many countries as would submit to it ; because the moment that any Church allowed any of its deposed prelates to appeal to a foreign bishop, its own independence was gone. And as the Roman prelate, to encourage appeals, would be tempted to support the appellant, the greater the scoundrel, the more likely he was to succeed. The history of the following centuries shows the disgraceful conflicts which this council was forged to support.

The documents on which it rests are those which go under the name of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria. Fragments or translations of these documents are to be found in an appendix to the works of Hilary, bishop of Poitiers ; and some additions were discovered by Maffei in the archives of the

chapter of Verona.* But the question will depend upon the genuineness of these Athanasian documents.

To place the subject more fully before the reader, and make it more intelligible to him, I will give a summary of the contents of the Athanasian documents as far as they relate to this council.

It has been already said in the text, that these documents give a representation of Meletius different from what may be collected from the synodal letter of the Nicene Council.† They say that he had been deposed, in a synod of Egyptian bishops, for many crimes, and principally for having sacrificed to idols; that he became a schismatic; and that his followers were called after him, Meletians. They were not friendly to the Alexandrian prelates, and had spoken evil of Peter, Achillas, and Alexander. Although they had been favourably received by the Nicene Council, they continued their enmity; and, on the accession of Athanasius, who, five months after the Nicene Council, was made bishop of Alexandria, began again to disturb the Churches.

They then state that Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, the patron of the Arian heresy, having heard of their proceedings, sent to them, and by promises made them his friends; that he then wrote to Athanasius, desiring him to receive Arius. On his refusal, Eusebius represented to

* Osservazioni Litterarie, vol. iii.

† See p. 59.

the emperor Constantine, that, were it not for the wilfulness and obstinacy of Athanasius, peace would soon be restored to the Church; and he suggested to him to order Athanasius to re-admit Arius. The emperor complied with his request, and a portion of the letter which he wrote is inserted. "Now that you know my will, offer no hindrance to any one who wishes to enter the Church. If I shall know that you disobey, I will send some one to depose you, and remove you from your place." It is almost needless to add, that a letter conceived in such terms is incredible. The Athanasian documents then proceed to say, that Athanasius declined to obey the emperor's order, informing him that there could be no union between a heresy which fights against Christ and the Catholic Church. With this reply the emperor is satisfied, which is also curious.

Eusebius, being thus foiled, sent to the Meletians, requesting them to invent some charges against Athanasius, and present them to the emperor. They accordingly brought to the court a complaint respecting some claim for linen vestments which he had made upon the Egyptians. This accusation, however, failed; as Apis and Macarius, two of Athanasius's presbyters, by a lucky chance, which we shall see always befel Athanasius, were in the city at the time; and they denied its truth, and the calumniators were condemned. The emperor then wrote a letter to Athanasius, in which he spoke severely of his opponents; at the same time ordering him to pay him a visit. This coming to

the ears of Eusebius, he prevailed upon the Meletians to await the approach of Athanasius, and present some other accusation. They did so; and when Athanasius arrived, they accused Macarius of breaking a sacred chalice, and Athanasius of having sent a bag of gold to one Philumenus. The emperor having investigated the charges in a suburb of Nicomedia, and finding them false, expelled the calumniators from his court, and sent back Athanasius to his see with a commendatory letter.

It would now be natural to expect that we should hear of no more charges; but, in spite of their disgraceful expulsion from the court, the Meletians, in a short time, renewed their disturbances. They proceeded in the following manner. The Marcotis was a portion of the country bordering on Alexandria; and the Meletians, it is said, had never gained a footing in it. It was divided into districts, the clergy performing their duties in the district churches. At this time Ischyrras, a man of bad character, professing himself a clerk, endeavoured to mislead the people of one of the districts. The presbyter belonging to the place, having discovered his practices, informed Athanasius, who was then on his visitation. He immediately sent Macarius to summon Ischyrras before him. Macarius found him sick, and lying in a cell; and he enjoined his father to forbid his doing what had been alleged against him. In revenge, Ischyrras, on his recovery, passed over to the Meletians. On receiving this accession to their party, the Eusebians and Meletians at last invented the story

that Macarius had broken a sacred chalice [it should be observed, however, that this had already been charged against Macarius, and he had been acquitted by the emperor], and a very horrible crime against Athanasius, that he had murdered one Arsenius. To support this latter accusation they hid Arsenius, and carried about a hand to convey the impression that his body had been cut to pieces. They said, also, that Ischyrras, whom they did not know [although a few lines before he is said to have gone over to them], was a presbyter. This was necessary to give a greater colour to their charge. The friends of Ischyrras, hearing of these proceedings, reproved him for his share in them; and he came to Athanasius in tears, and said that nothing of the kind had been done by Macarius, and that he, Ischyrras, had been suborned by the Meletians. In proof of this, Athanasius inserts a letter from Ischyrras to himself; which, so far from vindicating Macarius, says nothing about him and the chalice, but acquits Athanasius of having broken a chalice, and of overturning a holy table (a crime with which he had never been charged); and is silent about the murder with which he had been charged.

This confession of Ischyrras, however, whatever it was, Athanasius says, might have been expected to stay the calumny; but still, notwithstanding, they again spread abroad the same charges against him, and carried them to the emperor; that the emperor had previously heard of the chalice in Psammathia, and had acquitted him [it was not

him but Macarius]; that the emperor sent a letter to Dalmatius, the censor at Antioch, desiring him to investigate the charge of murder. Athanasius was accordingly summoned to clear himself. But he, knowing it to be false, paid at first no attention to the summons [not a very likely tale]. Afterwards, however, hearing the emperor was in a stir about it, he wrote to the Egyptian bishops, and also sent a deacon to learn something of Arsenius, whom he had not seen for five or six years. Arsenius, to make a long tale short, says Athanasius, was at length found. He had been concealed first in Egypt, but was discovered hidden at Tyre. On being found he would not own himself to be Arsenius, until he had been recognised in the judgment hall belonging to Paul the bishop, when for shame he could no longer deny himself. He behaved in this manner that the plot might not be discovered, as he was in compact with the Eusebians.

When Arsenius had been found, Athanasius reported it to the emperor, and also recalled to his mind that he had already acquitted Macarius at Nicomedia of the breaking of the chalice. The emperor immediately put a stop to the investigation before Dalmatius, and stopped Eusebius and his party, who were then proceeding into the East to condemn Athanasius.

To prove the truth of the charge of murder, out of several letters he presents one from Alexander, bishop of Thessalonica, to Athanasius, which, under the circumstances, is a very singular document indeed. It commences by congratulating

one Serapion for magnifying his father's memory by his own pious life, speaks highly of one Sozon, and concludes by saying, that "the deacon Macarius had given him pleasure by writing to him from Constantinople; that Archaf [John, the chief Meletian conspirator] was in disgrace for giving out that a man, who was in reality yet alive, had been murdered." That is all that is said. Supposing that one of Athanasius's deacons had written from Constantinople to Thessalonica to inform its bishop of Athanasius's escape from the horrible accusation laid against him, this is a very extraordinary letter of congratulation.

But it is not more extraordinary than the letter from Arsenius to Athanasius. He had entered into a league with the Eusebians to aid in a charge of murder against Athanasius, and a letter is expressly inserted, which he wrote after he had been discovered, to show more clearly the wickedness of his calumniators. We should expect to find in it feelings of shame, and the bitterest self-reproach. But, so far from it, Arsenius must have forgot his crime altogether; the charge is never once alluded to; there is no sign of sorrow. He writes to his most dearly beloved pope that he will no longer hold communion with schismatics, and that he will very shortly come to see him; and concludes by wishing him health in the Lord for many years.

But the most extraordinary letter is that said to be written by Constantine to this John, or Archaf, who was the leader of the Meletians in their diabolical machinations. He had confessed his

crime in a letter to the emperor. We might have expected to hear of his having been immediately transferred to the hangman. No such thing. The emperor writes to him, expressing the pleasure he had received from his Prudence's letter. He was delighted that he had laid aside all littleness of mind, and was joined to the Church, and one with Athanasius. And, as a reward for his conduct, he offers him a public conveyance to come and see him, that he may have the enjoyment of the emperor's presence. The conclusion of the letter to this self-convicted conspirator, this infamous and confessed felon, is, "May God preserve you continually, dearly beloved brother."

Wonders, however, do not cease in this history. In spite of the confession of the conspirators, and the appearance of the dead man alive, the Eusebians set the Meletians at work again; and the same charges are again brought forward. And, what is most strange, although the emperor knew, from having several times investigated the story of the chalice, that that charge was a falsity; and although he knew that (as he says) Arsenius being alive, could not have been murdered, yet he ordered a new investigation to take place at Tyre, and to be conducted against the accused with remarkable severity. The count Dionysius was sent to preside at it; a military attendance was granted to the Eusebians; Macarius was taken to Tyre in the custody of soldiers; and Athanasius was compelled to attend.

The inquiry commenced, and the charges as

usual could not be proved. Arsenius was again presented alive, and the chalice was not proved to have been broken. Enraged at this result, the council sent a commission of six persons into Egypt, to examine testimony on the spot. The commissioners selected were all Eusebians, partisans and enemies of the accused.

They were Theognius, Maris, Macedonius, Theodorus, Ursacius, and Valens, but whether bishops or no is not stated. They had letters to the prefect; a military escort was sent with them. Macarius, the accused, was not allowed to go; but the accuser was taken. It was a manifest conspiracy. The presbyters at Alexandria asked to be present at the examination, but they were refused. The prefect Philagrius, an apostate, with heathen soldiery, were admitted to discuss, and examine into, subjects which would not have been submitted even to catechumens. The clergy of Athanasius were shut out lest the object of the commission might be defeated.

These statements are proved by several letters from different parties, which are inserted. One of them, from the presbyters of Alexandria and the Mareotis, however, gives a point blank contradiction to what Athanasius had previously stated about Ischyrras. Their proof of the groundlessness of the charge is, that Ischyrras had been reduced to a layman before the Council of Nice, and so had continued; and that, consequently, there was not the least ground for the charge; while Athanasius had stated that he was officiating at the

time of his visitation, and endeavouring to mislead the people; and that, having been repressed by his relations, he had gone over to the Meletians. The Egyptian bishops at Tyre, however, support Athanasius; they seem to admit that Ischyra had a congregation of seven persons.

Athanasius then states that he left the synod, and complained to the emperor, and that the emperor wrote to the bishops. These having convicted Athanasius and deposed him, had left Tyre and gone to Jerusalem. Constantine informed them of Athanasius's appeal, and desired them to come to Constantinople, and justify their conduct. The Eusebians were greatly alarmed at this summons. They would allow none but the two Eusebiuses, Theognius, Patrophilus, Ursacius, and Valens, to approach the emperor. But what is most remarkable, when they arrived, instead of justifying the grounds of their condemnation, they said not a word about the chalice or Arsenius, but affirmed that Athanasius had threatened to prohibit the accustomed corn being sent from Egypt to Constantinople. The story was immediately denied by some Egyptian bishops, who chanced, as usual, to be present; but the emperor, highly incensed, would hear nothing; and, without more ado, he sent Athanasius away to exile in Gaul. The Egyptian bishops took a curious, although not a singular, view of the emperor's conduct. They say the grace of God moved the heart of the pious emperor to mercy, and the sentence, instead of death, was only exile.

Here we must suppose him to stay till after the death of Constantine, A.D. 337.

Athanasius then states that, on the occurrence of that event, Constantine, the son, sent him back to Alexandria with a letter, in which he said that his father had only exiled him in mercy, to save him from his enemies; and that it had been his intention to restore him, only he was prevented by death.

This account adds to the marvels of the history. It would surely have seemed a more just and natural way of saving Athanasius from his enemies to have sent them into exile.

No sooner, however, is Athanasius restored to his see, than the Eusebians commence their plottings again. They bring charges against him of homicides and slaughters after his return. They send legates, and accuse him to the three Augustuses, and to Julius, the bishop of Rome. Athanasius, hearing of this, sends legates on his part; who, having gone to Rome, so refute the statements of the Eusebian legates, that, for shame, they leave Rome in a great hurry. One of them, although ill, went away by night. These Eusebian legates had asked Julius to write to one Pistus, as bishop of Alexandria; but the Alexandrian clergy, when they came, told Julius that this Pistus was an Arian, who had been excommunicated, and that his consecrator was Secundus, who also had been excommunicated by the Council of Nice. Before, however, the Eusebians left Rome, they, thinking to frighten Athanasius, asked Julius to call a

council. They pledged themselves to attend it, and prove all that they had said against Athanasius. Beside this, even when they had returned home, a letter of a similar import was sent to Julius from the Oriental prelates, not only requesting him to call a council, but, if he liked, to be himself the judge.

In the meantime the Eusebians, on the dedication of a new church at Antioch, which, begun by Constantine, had been finished by Constantius, assembled a council; and, without waiting for that which they had asked Julius to call, they deposed Athanasius and elected one Gregory, a perfect stranger to the city, in his room. He was sent to Alexandria, not accompanied by clergy, like a bishop, but by soldiers. On his arrival the utmost confusion prevailed. Athanasius gives opposite accounts of his own conduct. In one he says that he fled from Alexandria before Gregory had arrived. In the other that he stayed till after the attack and destruction of one of the churches; and that it was not until their approach to the one in which he was, that he betook himself to flight. He gives a frightful account of the atrocities that were committed in the first church. The monks were trodden under foot, the virgins stripped, the clergy beaten, bishops cast into prison, and at length the church burnt. Whether, however, he went before or after these events, when he did go, he went to Rome, and laid his case before the Church. This was at Easter, A. D. 341. The Roman Church was greatly distressed, and it was

determined to send to the Orientals, and desire them to come to Rome and meet and explain the charges brought against them. Accordingly Elpidius and Philoxenus, two Roman presbyters, are sent with the summons. The Eusebians, however, decline to attend. They had never imagined, when they offered to meet Athanasius at Rome, that he would ever go there. They make excuses, therefore, and complain of short notice; and truly it was very short indeed, for, although it was Easter before Athanasius left Alexandria, the council was to meet at Rome before Christmas. Moreover, they said, owing to the political troubles of the times, they could not leave their sees. They detain the presbyters till January, and then send them back to Rome with a rude sarcastic letter, denying that Western synods could review Oriental decisions.

On the return of the legates, Julius waited nearly a year before he held the council, hoping that the Orientals would think better of it and come; and, moreover, he did not like to show their letter to the bishops. At length, when Athanasius had been eighteen months at Rome, and no Orientals came, Julius summoned the council. More than fifty bishops attended. They were greatly hurt at hearing the Oriental letter; but they proceeded to take the Egyptian evidence for Athanasius, which entirely refuted the evidence of the Oriental legates against him. He was therefore acquitted, and they gave him their communion.

The case of another prelate, Marcellus, bishop of

Ancyra, in Galatia, who had been deposed in the East by a council at Constantinople, A.D. 336, and had come to Rome, was also gone into ; and it was found that he had been most unjustly condemned. The book which he had written was found not to be heretical. The passages which had been brought against him, when examined, turned out to be not statements of his own opinions, but objections put into the mouths of his opponents, and which he was refuting. They therefore acquitted him of that charge, and received him also into their communion.

Before the council was dissolved, the bishops, indignant at the Oriental letter to Julius, desired that he would reply to it. He assented, and his letter is inserted, and will be more particularly noticed hereafter. The Orientals, however, took no notice of it, and Athanasius remained in Italy. He spent his time chiefly at Rome in devotional employment. He never saw Constans except in the company of the bishop of the city in which he was residing. Among the bishops whom he adduces to prove that statement, is the aged Spanish bishop of Cordova, Hosius, then about ninety years of age. Athanasius is precise, too, in saying, that when he fled from Alexandria it was not to Constans, but to Rome, to lay his case before the Church. Indeed, Julius says that Athanasius did not go to Rome until he had first been summoned thither by himself, which does not agree with Athanasius's own account, that he had suddenly left Alexandria to save his life on Gregory's arrival. Athanasius

further says, that he never wrote to Constans, except in self-defence against the Eusebians; and also when he had made for him, at his request, a copy, probably of the Gospels; and that when, owing to the remonstrances of certain bishops, Constans had proposed a council to his brother, it was without his knowledge; he did not know of it till Constans had sent for him to Milan and told him of his proceedings. After this time, and before the council, Athanasius states he was at Aquileia, and that Constans sent for him into Gaul to join Hosius, who was going to Sardica, the city where the intended council was to be held, as Constantius had acceded to his brother's request.

The Council of Sardica was intended to be œcumenical. But it was not so from the following causes, as we learn by a synodal letter professing to have been issued by the Oriental portion of the council. The Western prelates took with them Athanasius, Marcellus, Asclepas, and other bishops who had been deposed by the Orientals, having received them into their communion; and, when the Orientals came to the council, they found these deposed prelates sitting among the bishops. They declined to enter it unless these were excluded. They could do no otherwise, they said, except they came to be judged by the parties whom they had condemned. The charges against the bishops had all been examined by the Westerns, and the verdict of the Orientals overturned. There seemed to be nothing to do at Sardica but to condemn the

Oriental. As a preliminary measure, therefore, to their joining the council, the Orientals insisted that Athanasius and his companions should be removed. This the Westerns refused; they could not do it, for they had prejudged the cases, and had received them into their communion. Both parties insisted; neither would give way. The consequence was, that the two parties held separate councils; and, having abused and anathematised each other, broke up.

The synodal letters are extant. The Western letter professes that they had been assembled by the grace of God at Sardica from Rome, Spain, Gaul, Italy, Campania, Calabria, Apulia, Africa, Sardinia, the Pannonias, the Mysias, Dacia, Noricum, Siscia, Dardania, another Dacia, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia, the Epiri, Thrace, and Rhodope, and Palestine, and Arabia, and Crete, and Egypt; and the Oriental letter states that they were assembled from the Thebais, from Palestine, Arabia, Phœnice, Syria, Mesopotamia, Cilicia, Isauria, Cappadocia, Galatia, Pontus, Bithynia, Pamphylia, Paphlagonia, Caria, Phrygia, Pisidia, and from the islands of the Cyclades, from Lydia, Asia, Europe, Hellespont, Thrace, and the country around Mount Hæmus.

After these proceedings each party returned home. The Western portion sent a number of letters to various parties, informing them of the result of their proceedings; and both sections sent their synodal letters to all bishops everywhere.

The fabulous character of these synods is shown

by the story itself. No results followed them. It was Constans who effected the recal of Athanasius. He wrote to his brother, intimating that if he were not recalled, he would replace him at Alexandria himself. As Constans, by the death of Constantine, had become much the stronger of the two, this hint was decisive; and Constantius wrote to recal Athanasius, who does not seem to have heeded the letter, or replied to it. In fact the humbled emperor had to write three times before he received a reply, or saw his bishop. At length, after a year had passed, Athanasius resolved to return. Before he left Italy he went from Aquileia to Rome, to bid the Romans farewell, and thank them for all their kindness; and Julius sent by him a congratulatory letter to the Alexandrian Church.

Athanasius then commenced his triumphant return. He went by land to Constantinople, had an interview or two on the road with Constantius at Viminacum and Antioch, and pursued his journey to Alexandria by Jerusalem. Everywhere he was welcomed. This was about A.D. 349. Then followed the death of Constans, A.D. 350. After a while Constantius became master of the Roman empire, A.D. 353, and then the Arian persecution followed, when Athanasius was again driven from Egypt, and George the Cappadocian placed in his room.

We learn from other sources, that on the death of Constantius, A.D. 361, George was murdered, and Julian allowed Athanasius to return, A.D. 362. In a few months he was again exiled, and returned

on the accession of Jovian, A. D. 363. Valens attempted a fourth exile, but was advised to desist; and Athanasius died in peace at Alexandria, A. D. 373.

If the reader will patiently reconsider this story, he will, I think, regard it as almost next to a miracle that such a mass of absurdity should have maintained its place in history. One would have thought that the least reflection and exercise of reason must have told the student that, even if there was a foundation of truth, there was a very large superstructure of folly and falsehood; and that the impossibility of distinguishing between these different materials rendered the whole, and every part of it, void of authority. Let the reader for a moment consider the broad outline of the statements without the absurdities that fill up the picture.

I. Macarius is charged with breaking the chalice, and acquitted by the emperor at Nicomedia.

II. The charge is almost immediately repeated, and Athanasius is accused of the murder of Arsenius. The emperor remits the inquiry to Dalmatius the censor, and a council is summoned to meet at Cæsarea, in Palestine. But, before it is held, the emperor, by the confession of the conspirators, is made acquainted with the falsity of the accusation, and instead of sending them to the hangman, takes them into favour; while he writes to Athanasius, most strongly reprobating these same conspirators, and adding, that if they dare to utter the calumnies again, he will not remit the inquiry to an eccle-

siastical tribunal, but judge it himself, and punish them for their conduct.

III. Yet, almost immediately afterwards, the charges are again repeated; and the emperor, well knowing that the chalice was not broken, and that the man was alive, remits the investigation to the Council of Tyre, and there Athanasius and Macarius are convicted.

IV. Athanasius instantly appeals to the emperor at Constantinople, who summons the bishops into his presence to justify their verdict. On their arrival, the charges on which he had been convicted at Tyre are not even noticed. No inquiry is made about them. A fresh charge is introduced; and the emperor, although all his previous acquaintance with the parties and their proceedings (for he knew the atrocious falsehood of their verdict at Tyre), would have prejudiced him in favour of Athanasius, and although the truth of the fresh charge is denied by Egyptian bishops present, in a rage, and without investigation, sends Athanasius into exile.

Can nonsense proceed further? not easily; and yet all this is in the handwriting of Athanasius. Unless some one has assumed his name, his character is pledged to the truth of every part of these statements.

But whatever these statements might be, all was not nonsense; and, before we approach the evidence of the existence of the Sardican Council, let us look at one letter that was written, and for the sake of which all this fable was invented.

The point of the Sardican documents is the letter

of Julius, the Roman bishop, alleged to have been sent, at the request of the Roman Council, to the prelates of the East, because they had refused to attend it. It will require some consideration, and will repay it; but let us previously observe who the writer is, and to whom it is written. The writer is the bishop of Rome; the parties to whom it is written are the primate of Cappadocia, the primate of the East, the bishop of Constantinople, and other Oriental prelates; and the letter complains that they had not obeyed his summons, and met at Rome to confront the primate of Alexandria, who had some charge to make against them. What a magnificent conception, worthy of Rome's palmiest days—the bishops of Egypt, Antioch, and Constantinople pleading in person before the bishop of Rome on his own judgment seat! It had not been realised, not even in the plenitude of their power, either by a Gregory or an Innocent; and yet in Rome's very cradle it had almost come to pass; that is, if this letter be true. But there are difficulties in the way.

And first, the complaint which Athanasius had to bring against the Eastern prelates was, that on false grounds they had deposed him from his see, and consecrated another person bishop of Alexandria. They had accused him of offences rendering him unfit for the episcopate; but he denied their truth. His supposed crimes having been committed in the province of Alexandria, that province, according to the canon law of the Church,

was the place of judicature, and its bishops were the judges. If, therefore, this proceeding at Rome was according to any law, it was not according to the canon law. Church history is clear as light on that point. The only other law known was introduced by the admission of the imperial element into Church government; and by imperial authority a cause could be removed from the proper place and proper parties for its decision to any other place, and before any other parties the emperor chose to name for this purpose; but in such a case there must first be had the imperial rescript. Where, then, is the rescript of Constantius (in whose dominions the Alexandrian diocese was situate) to authorise this most extraordinary council? It is essential to its validity; and yet the synodal letter contains no allusion to it, nor do the documents give it.

Again: as Rome, the place of meeting, was in the dominions of Constans, two emperors were concerned in this rescript. As no prelate would have dared to have left the East to attend a council at Rome without the permission of Constantius, so neither would the Roman prelate have dared to convoke a council, except of his own provincials, (even if the bishops would have attended it), without his own sovereign's leave. The absence of any notice of these rescripts is fatal to this Roman Council. Again: the letter says that the Eusebian legates, whom it imagined to have been at Rome, were so abashed by the sight of Athanasius's legates, that they fled, even although one of them

was ill. Would their masters, then, have been in a better plight had they been present? And yet Athanasius says the Oriental prelates were so eager to come, that they even wrote from the East urging Julius to convene this synod, promising that they would attend, and prove all their words. But when had an Oriental prelate been in Rome, the habits and language of whose inhabitants he knew nothing of? And is it credible that these primates, who were the ecclesiastical lords of the East, and whose doctrinal views differed from those of the West, would have been such egregious blockheads as to go between one and two thousand miles into the dominions of a foreign emperor, and certainly not among friends, and submit to the degradation of a trial, when they knew, as these documents insinuate, that they were guilty of the wickedness and injustice charged against them. "Oh, but," Athanasius says, "they never intended to go; they never expected Athanasius would attend." I dare say not. But, if this story be true, where did they expect Athanasius to go on Gregory's arrival at Alexandria in the way described, but into the West? Moreover, to increase the incredibility of the story, the emperor Constantius was a participator and approver of all the proceedings complained of. He was present at Antioch on the election of Gregory; he was one of the principal defendants. Is it likely that he, even if his leading prelates had been such simpletons as to compromise their own position and character, would have given them permission to go

and compromise himself also ? The verdict against them was a verdict against himself.

Before even we approach the letter, the very notion of such proceedings is so excessively absurd, that we seem to partake of the absurdity, in treating it as if it was worth the while to combat it.

But let us take another view of the question. According to these documents, Athanasius would escape from Alexandria about the end of April, A.D. 341. Easter Day being on the 19th of April, he would arrive in Rome during the month of May. Some time would be consumed (I am arguing on the presumption of the truth of the Athanasian documents) before they would decide at Rome on the expediency of the council. It would be June before the council would be determined upon. The emperors would then have to be asked for the rescripts. These would have to be obtained before Elpidius and Philoxenus could proceed to summon the prelates. Having obtained them, they would then have to proceed to deliver the summonses at Constantinople, Cæsarea, Antioch, and, still lower down, in Palestine.

All this, if the Athanasian documents are true, these wonderful men accomplished. Nay, they were even *detained* at Antioch till the beginning of A.D. 342, past the time of meeting ; that is to say, in the end of April, Athanasius escaped from Egypt to Rome. After consultation in that city, and the resolution to hold the council, the rescripts had to be obtained ; the messengers had to travel

with their summonses throughout the East; and the Eastern prelates were all to have been at Rome before Christmas. They were expected, if such a thing could be imagined, or that they had received their summonses by that time, to have started immediately, and in winter, and by some mode of travelling at present lost to society, of which, perhaps, the Great Western Express is a faint representation, to have reached Rome before Christmas.

It requires no more, nor even one tenth of what has been said, to be satisfied that this letter is a forgery; but a few observations must be made upon its contents for its own merits. It shows Roman policy in the next century.

Who wrote it, or to whom it is written, is a conjecture. One Julius wrote to Dianius, Flacillus, Narcissus, Eusebius, Maris, Macedonius, Theodorus, and their companions, who had written to him from Antioch; but whether it came from an ecclesiastical synod of bishops, or a regimental mess-room, is to be conjectured. Supposing them to be bishops, the order of names is to be observed; the bishop of Cappadocia has precedence of the primate of the East.

And now let us mark the contents. However absurd the idea may be of the Eastern primates going to Rome to submit their conduct to the examination of Julius, it is most strenuously insisted upon in the letter, that he expected they would have come. No doubt was to be entertained upon that point. And although they had taken offence

at his summons, and amid the terms of respect with which they addressed him, had allowed sarcastic expressions to appear, still it was their canonical duty to have come at his bidding. Indeed, so little could he doubt but they would come, that he had kept their letter a whole year by him, mentioning its contents to no one, that the feelings of the brethren at Rome might not be hurt at learning their disobedience. This is exceedingly startling intelligence; and made still more so, by our being informed that their necessary attendance was in accordance with a canon of the Nicene Council. He says — “The bishops assembled in the great synod of Nicæa permitted, not without the will of God, the decision of a former council to be reviewed by a later, in order that the judges, having before their eyes the probability of a revision, might examine with all carefulness; and the accused might have confidence that their case had been decided according to justice, and not from any hostile feeling in the minds of former judges.”

The foundation is thus laid of the object of this letter: a former synodal sentence can be revised, and that by the authority of a canon of the Nicene Council. Of course it is a direct falsehood as respects the sentence of a provincial synod.

Julius is then made to say that this is an ancient practice, and an established custom. But the Nicene Council was held only seventeen years before the supposed date of this letter; and therefore, except the writer forgot himself at the mo-

ment, and spoke of the Nicene Council as from the next century, when he may have been writing, he must allude to the authority of revision as an established part of the canon law. But, previous to the accession of Constantine, there is no evidence of the revision of any provincial sentence, which is what is meant here, by the prelates of another province. Nor, indeed, had there been after that event, except in the single case of the Roman decision of Miltiades on the Donatist schism, which was reviewed by the Synod of Arles; and the allusion to that council in this letter makes me not the less suspicious of the Arles Council, although it was a revision of a Roman sentence. But these proceedings — both at Rome and Arles — if real, were uncanonical; both were contrary to canon law. So that it may be said there had not been known, at the time when this letter is supposed to have been written, any instance of a revision of a synodal sentence; and yet this writer calls it an ancient practice in the Church, confirmed by Councils.

Having thus laid his foundation in falsehood, the next step in the letter is to affirm that, even if the Orientals had not desired a synod, and that he had urged it with a view to harass them on account of the complaints of their suffering brethren, such a proposal would have been reasonable and just. It would have been in accordance to ecclesiastical usage, and pleasing to God.

It is here advanced that he, even when a revision was not agreed on by both parties, could, on the

complaint of one of them, bring the cause before him. This too, he says, was ecclesiastical. He does not say in accordance with canon law, but that is implied. It was ecclesiastical usage. Of course this is another falsehood. At the same time he has not yet said that this power of revising rested with him alone, as bishop of Rome; he has only laid it down generally.

As he proceeds, he pretends to doubt that they really thought all bishops of equal authority; he treats their expressions as if they had been only angry and passionate declamation; but he states no rule of distinction.

And towards the close he openly states that Athanasius and Marcellus, according to the canons of the Church, should not have been proceeded against without writing to the West, as they were bishops, and moreover bishops not of common, but of Apostolical, Churches.

It is here implied that no Oriental bishop could be deposed without previously making a reference to the West, that is to Rome, as he represents the Western Church; which is another falsehood.

And he adds that it was more particularly important that they should have written to them concerning the Alexandrian Church. "Do you not know that such was the custom to write to us first, and so from hence the sentence to be delivered? If there has been any suspicion against the bishop of that city, you ought to have written to the Church here." But in the present instance they, without having made the Roman Church

acquainted with the facts, but having done what they liked, desired that the Roman Church, which had never condemned Athanasius, should join in their decision. Such was not the order of Paul; such was not the tradition of the Fathers.

Here is an allusion to the forgery about the two Dionysiuses already noticed, and which was no doubt written by the man that wrote this letter.

And then peeps out the forger barefaced. "I beseech you gladly bear with me. The things I write are for the public good. What we have received from the blessed Peter the apostle, that I make known to you, and I would not have written, as *I think that these things are publicly known to all men*, if what has happened had not disturbed us."

To induce a belief that such proceedings as are here inculcated were sanctioned by the canon law of the early part of the fourth century, was the object of this letter; and the facts of the Athanasian documents are skilfully interwoven to give it an appearance of truth and nature.

At the time when this letter was supposed to be written, bishops had been deposed everywhere without any known reference to the Roman see. Two bishops of Antioch, one only ten years previously to the supposed date of this letter, had been deposed; and the bishop of Rome, if he knew of it at all, had only known of the decision, like other prelates, after the event. And there had been no instance of any trial or deposition of an Alexandrian prelate.

From the beginning to the end the letter is false. But it is very instructive as to the early nefarious policy of Rome, the object of it being to induce a practice of appeal from the provincial synods to the Roman bishop, by pretending to show that it had been from early time a practice founded on canon law; a practice equally insisted upon afterwards in the spurious Isidorian letters. This claim was resisted when first published, and the contest was maintained for centuries; but the victory was won at last over the Western Churches, by political causes combining with the persevering and unscrupulous acts of Roman policy and ambition.

We have now approached the council itself. Let us attend to what is said of it. It was summoned from thirty-five provinces, from Spain to Mesopotamia, from Gaul to the Thebais. One hundred and seventy bishops attended it from all these provinces. Not only did nearly one hundred present acquit Athanasius, but other bishops, without having heard the evidence, assented, by letters afterwards sent from their homes, to his acquittal. The total number of signatures was three hundred and forty-four. Six belonged to Spain, thirty to Gaul, thirty-six to Africa, and fifteen to Palestine; while about eighty Orientals, to say nothing of those who were ill and left on the road, were present to support his condemnation. Before the council separated, the two parties, into which it is said that it divided, sent letters, also, into all

countries, to the bishops everywhere, stating the result of their deliberations.

It seems to me the news of this council must have penetrated into every diocese of Christendom; and that the importance of the inquiry, proved by the imperial summons of an œcumenical council, and the dignity of the accused, to say nothing of one of the emperors himself being almost a defendant, must have powerfully attracted the attention of the Church. And yet by one of those extraordinary fatalities which seem to haunt our investigations, the people of the fourth century, who lived in this stirring time, knew no more of the Sardican Council than they had known of Victor and Stephen's excommunications, with the councils and disturbances which they had occasioned.

If we look into the Greek writers in the fourth century for some account of it, it is in vain. Neither Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia; nor the two Gregories (although Gregory of Nazianzum is said to have published a life of Athanasius, in the form of an oration); nor Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, make any allusion to it.

If we look into the Latin writers it is the same. Jerome never mentions it, not even in his "Chronicle," nor in that voucher for doubtful reputations, the work on "Ecclesiastical Writers;" nor Hilary, bishop of Poitiers (except in the smaller and fragmental works attributed to him, the genuineness of which I shall presently have to investigate); nor Ambrose, bishop of Milan; nor

Optatus, bishop of Milevi ; nor Philastrius, bishop of Brescia ; nor even Ruffinus, a presbyter of Aquileia, who, in the first quarter of the fifth century, wrote a history of the Church from the time of Constantine to the death of Theodosius ; and yet he had been at Alexandria in the lifetime, it is said, of Athanasius ; at any rate, he had been above twenty years in Palestine before he returned home into Italy, and wrote his history. No important event affecting the Church generally, and so celebrated a prelate as Athanasius in particular, can be imagined to have escaped his knowledge. But although he relates the proceedings of the Nicene, Tyrian, Milan, Rimini, and Alexandrian councils, there is not a word in his history of this extraordinary and œcumenical Council of Sardica.

I think I have now shown quite sufficient grounds for reasonable doubt respecting the existence of this council ; and I hope the reader will feel inclined to accompany me in some further investigation of the authority on which it rests.

In the first place let us compare the statements in other writers respecting the exiles of Athanasius with those which we find in the Athanasian documents, and we shall, perhaps, by that means ascertain the time before which these documents had not appeared.

It will have been seen that the Athanasian documents give four exiles to Athanasius :—

I. After the Tyrian Council, A.D. 335, lasting till A.D. 338.

II. When Gregory was sent from the Council of

Antioch, A.D. 341, lasting till after the Sardican Council, that is, to A.D. 349.

III. When George was sent, lasting till Julian, A.D. 362.

IV. Under Julian, lasting till Jovian, A. D. 363.

The two last are admitted on all hands; the question to be examined is, whether Athanasius was exiled at Tyre under Constantine, sent home by Constantine his son, and afterwards driven by Constantius into a second exile, and restored after the Sardican Council.

I will now present, in as chronological an order as I can, the statements of the different writers who have detailed or mentioned any of the events connected with these exiles.

The first writer whom I shall notice is Epiphanius, bishop of Constantia, in Cyprus; an eminent prelate of the fourth century, cotemporary with Athanasius, and, if he wrote the book that goes under his name, acquainted with him. The portion of that book relating to this subject professes to have been written a little after the death of Athanasius.

He states that Athanasius with the best intentions, but with more zeal than was agreeable to the Meletians, sought to bring them into his communion; that they, viewing his conduct as persecution, complained of it to Constantine; they said that, in the visitation by Athanasius of his diocese, one of his deacons, with some other persons, had violently broken into one of their

churches and profanely broken a chalice; and that Arsenius, a priest of the Mareotis, had been beaten either by Athanasius, or some of those about him, and his hand had been cut off, which they showed to the emperor. That the emperor, who was ignorant of the malice of the Meletians, in a great rage ordered a council to assemble at Tyre and investigate the charge, under the presidency of Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine.

As the testimony was conflicting, Ursacius and Valens were sent by the council into the Mareotis to collect evidence. They performed their commission in bad faith, as they afterwards confessed in a letter to Julius, bishop of Rome, and also to Athanasius. That Athanasius would not submit himself to the trial, but, before it commenced, fled to Constantine. The emperor did not believe his story. Athanasius, in consequence, said to him, "God shall judge between me and thee because thou favourest my accusers." The emperor, offended by this freedom, sent him into exile. That in the meanwhile he was deposed by the council, his behaviour to the emperor being added to his other offences; and that he remained in Italy twelve or thirteen years.

At length Arsenius was found in Arabia. He made himself known to Athanasius in his exile. Athanasius had him immediately conveyed to Constans and Constantius, who were together at the time, apparently during the life of Constantine; that the two hands which Arsenius was still found to possess, put to shame the trial at Tyre; and

that a great laugh arose in the world in consequence.

That Athanasius, who had been held in high honour at Rome and in Italy, and also in the estimation of the emperor and his two sons, Constantine and Constans, was sent, on Constantine's death, and with the consent of Constantius, into Egypt; Gregory being dead, who, in his exile, had been sent as bishop to Alexandria. The letters of the three emperors and Athanasius were extant. And that, owing to the machinations of Stephen and Leontius (but who or what they were we are not informed), he was again expelled, and George was placed in his room. He was in exile till the days of Julian. After the death of Jovian there were again tumults. Lucius was elected bishop of the Arians, but Valens, fearing the populace, would not interfere.*

If the reader will consider these statements, it will be quite clear that the writer had never seen the Athanasian documents. Epiphanius speaks of the first exile after the Council of Tyre, and that Athanasius remained twelve or thirteen years in Italy, till after the death of Constantine and also of Gregory, who had been sent to Alexandria in his room; at which time, by the exertions of Constantine and Constans with Constantius, he was allowed to return.

The next exile is when George was sent to Alexandria. There is consequently no account of

* Epiphan. Hær. 68.

the exile under Constantius, when Gregory is said to have been sent, and Philagrius and he performed such atrocities at Alexandria; nor of any Sardican Council. And at the same time, I think, it will be felt that a learned man like Epiphanius would not have written in such a manner, nor have been guilty of such historical ignorance as is displayed in this account. But the reader will remark that Athanasius is said to have been in exile in Italy "twelve or thirteen years." Now the Council of Tyre under Constantine, is fixed by the Athanasian letters at A.D. 335; add twelve or thirteen years to this, and it places the return of Athanasius to Alexandria in A.D. 347 or 348, that is, a little after the time assigned to the Sardican Council.

The next writer whom I shall introduce is Gregory of Nazianzum. About six years after the death of Athanasius, he is said to have delivered an oration (the twenty-first) at Constantinople, to the praise of Athanasius. He professes to give those events of his life which were the more known.

He states that Athanasius, having passed through the intermediate degrees, arrived at the episcopate of Alexandria, which was the same thing as being placed over the whole Church; and he hardly knew whether he had been placed there for his own merits, or to be the fountain of life of the Church. That he was elected by the united suffrage of the people to the chair of St. Mark; and that he was a true successor — not in his chair

only, having the mere name of successor, but he was his successor in his doctrine. He states that at Nice, Athanasius, as far as he was able, repressed Arianism; and that, when afterwards it raised its head, war was denounced against him.

He states distinctly that he endured three persecutions, three being necessary to make the warrior of the Lord perfect, and he names them:—the exile when Gregory succeeded him; that under Constantius, when George was sent; and the one under Julian.

There is no allusion to any return from any first exile, and to another expulsion when Gregory was substituted in his room, and to the consequent Council of Sardica. On these events there is an utter silence.

But although he is silent on these topics, he throws light upon other matters connected with Athanasius, which are exceedingly destructive to the authority of the Athanasian documents. Judging from the documents, it is difficult to ascertain which of his opponents was most cordially hated by Athanasius. The two bishops, Gregory and George, who were placed in his chair, and Philagrius the prefect, who assisted Gregory in taking possession of it, were perhaps more distinguished by his abuse than the others. It happened that these three men were all Cappadocians, and Gregory of Nazianzum was also a Cappadocian and a cotemporary. Let us now see what he says of them. He had lived in Cappadocia a great part of his life, and he is said,

about twenty years before he delivered this oration, to have been at Alexandria, when the confusions in that city were at their height.

While he joins in depicting George in the darkest colours, there is a most remarkable discrepancy between his statements and those of the Athanasian documents respecting the other two. Julius, in his letter to the Orientals, is made to say, with the knowledge and approbation of Athanasius, that Gregory was a stranger to the city, and unknown to the multitude. But Gregory of Nazianzum states that, previous to the expulsion of Athanasius, he had been residing at Alexandria, and had been most kindly received by Athanasius, who had regarded him with almost parental solicitude, and had placed most unbounded confidence in him. His charge against Gregory is not Arianism, but ingratitude. He says there was a rumour that, although others were the actors in the story of Arsenius, yet the hand of Absalom was with them. At the same time, he says, it was but rumour; and he always felt it his duty, on a doubtful matter, to take the merciful side.

But with respect to Philagrius, no one could recognise in his account the apostate monster of the Athanasian documents. Gregory says he was a most distinguished person, and so singularly beloved by the citizens of Alexandria, that they had petitioned the emperor, after his first period of office had expired, to send him back again among them. The emperor yielded to their wishes; and a little anecdote, which Gregory repeats, if true, depicts in vivid colours the truth of his statement.

On Philagrius entering into Alexandria the second time, so extraordinary was the concourse of citizens to welcome him, that one of the spectators said to another standing by him, "Did you ever see such a multitude so united in their expressions of honour?" The reply was, "No." The first spokesman rejoined, "Even if Constantius were to come, it would not be equalled." "Constantius!" was the reply; "nay, if even Athanasius were to enter, it would scarcely be equalled." Let the reader compare this with the Athanasian documents. I think on every ground it will be conceded to me, that the writer of that oration had never seen them.

I will now present what Jerome has inserted in his "Chronicle" on this subject. He places Constantine's death A.D. 340, instead of A.D. 337. I shall, therefore, not use his dates, but take his facts in their relative order.

In the second year after the death of Constantine he says, the Arian impiety, supported by the royal power, persecuted with exile, prison, and in various ways, first Athanasius, and then all the other bishops of his party.

In the fifth year after the death of Constantine was the dedication of the Church at Antioch.

In the sixth year after the death of Constantine lived Maximinus, bishop of Treves, in great repute, who honourably received Athanasius when Constantine was seeking after his life.

In the tenth year after the death of Constantine, Athanasius returned to Alexandria through the interference of Constans; that is, A.D. 347.

Twenty-five years after the death of Constantine, Athanasius returned again to Alexandria, on the murder of George, who had been consecrated in his place by the Arians; that is, A.D. 362.

These are all the facts stated by Jerome. It will be seen that he mentions no trial of Athanasius in the lifetime of Constantine; that the persecution arose in the second year of Constantius; that, in the fourth year of the persecution, Athanasius found a home at Treves, in the dominions of Constans; and that, A.D. 347, in the eighth year of the persecution, he returned to Alexandria through the influence of Constans. The date of the second persecution, when George was sent, is not mentioned, but the return of Athanasius is placed in A.D. 362.

Jerome, therefore, had never seen the Athanasian documents. There is no allusion to this extraordinary Council of Sardica.

I will now examine Ruffinus, who wrote his history in the first quarter of the fifth century. He, it will be remembered, was a presbyter of Aquileia, and a learned man. Unfortunately his work is interpolated; but the interpolation in his case, as in Jerome's, took place prior to the composition of the Athanasian documents. He says he will insert into his history all the great events relative to Athanasius, and yet he makes no mention of the Sardican Council.

He states that Constantius, seduced by the eunuchs, was made to believe Athanasius guilty of all manner of crimes; and that, for magical pur-

poses, he had cut off the hand of one Arsenius; that, in consequence, the Council of Tyre was summoned; that Archilaus, a count then governing Phœnice, was the president; and thither Athanasius was carried. He further states that Arsenius had been a reader of Athanasius, but having committed some fault, and fearing correction, he had withdrawn himself from Alexandria. The opponents of Athanasius took advantage of this circumstance, and kept Arsenius under the care of one of their party. The plot reached Arsenius in his retreat; he escaped from his hold by night, and presented himself at Tyre to Athanasius the day before the last day of the trial, and told him all that had befallen him. Athanasius desired him to keep at home, and tell no one of his presence. When the trial commenced, a charge of rape was first made and failed. Then came the charge of cutting off the hand of Arsenius. Arsenius was presented having two hands. A clamour arose. Athanasius, it was said, deals in magic. His enemies fell upon him. Archilaus took him out of their hands, conveyed him away by private passages, and counselled him to fly. The synod, however, met again; and, as if nothing had happened, condemned him as self-condemned; and, sending this account throughout the world, compelled, with the emperor's assistance, other bishops to condemn him also.

Athanasius was now an exile. No place was safe for him. Search was made everywhere. Rewards were offered for his capture, dead or

alive; and for six years he was hidden in a dry cistern.

He then fled to Constans, and was honourably received. Constans caused an inquiry to be made respecting Athanasius, and then he wrote to his brother, saying, that if he would not willingly allow him to return, he would compel him. Constantius, being alarmed, granted permission; and, having quietly reproved Athanasius, sent him to his see. They met at Antioch.

On the death of Constans he was again expelled, and George was sent in his room. They had formerly sent Gregory. Again there was a flight, and hiding-place, and edicts. Constantius then attacked the Western prelates, and required from them, first, the condemnation of Athanasius as the removal of a preliminary obstacle. Ruffinus then mentions the Council at Milan, the refusal of Dionysius of Milan, Eusebius of Vercelli, Paulinus of Treves, Rodanus, and Lucifer of Carali, to subscribe to Athanasius's condemnation. To these should be added, also, Hilary of Poitiers. All the rest consented.*

He then describes the Councils of Rimini and Seleucia, the exile of Liberius, and consecration of Felix.

It will be seen here, too, that although the times and facts of the persecutions are confounded, yet that, previous to Julian, only two exiles are named: the one after the Council of Tyre, and the other when George was sent. If Ruffinus had ever heard of the œcumenical Council of Sardica, it

* Hist. Eccl. xi. 15—20

must have been mentioned among the important facts relating to Athanasius, all which he had promised to record.

No dates are given by Ruffinus ; but it is clear that the Council of Tyre was held in the reign of Constantius. Supposing it to have occurred at the time Jerome has stated the persecution arose against Athanasius, it would have been held A.D. 339 ; add to it the six years of concealment, and the flight into the West, and the time of Athanasius's re-assuming the chair at Alexandria will be about A.D. 347.

There is also another statement under the name of Sulpicius Severus, a Gaul ; but it is such a manifestly ignorant and late forgery, that it is undeserving of notice. Although it mentions the council, the writer entirely opposes the documents. Copying from one of the Hilarian spurious documents, soon to be noticed, he affirms that there were two persons named Arrius ; that the heresy arose at the end of Constantine's reign, and that he was perverted by it, and expelled the bishops and clergy that would not adopt it ; that, on account of these proceedings, the Council of Nice was called ; that Arianism was condemned by it, and the emperor changed his views, and subscribed the Nicene Creed ; that the Arians soon after began to forge charges against their opponents, and first attacked Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria, who was a jurisconsult, and had been present at the Council at Nice as a deacon, and condemned him in his absence, asserting, among his other crimes and misdemeanours, that

he had received into his communion Marcellus and Photinus, whom the Arians had condemned ; and that they induced Constantine to banish him into Gaul ; that a synod of eighty Egyptian bishops remonstrated, saying that the sentence against Athanasius was unjust ; that news of this was carried to Constantine, who ordered an œcumenical council to assemble at Sardica, which acquitted Athanasius, and Marcellus was restored to his see ; that, before the council was dismissed, the emperor died ; that the recantation of Valens and Ursacius assisted in the vindication of Athanasius.

Although our judgment will instantly assure us, that whoever wrote that portion of the epitome of sacred history which terminates with the ten persecutions could never have written what has just been inserted, and which has been added to the book, still I beg to point out that only one exile is here mentioned previous to that one when George was sent to Alexandria. It was because the first banishment was considered unjust that Constantine is said to have summoned the Council of Sardica. There is no account of a previous restoration and second banishment prior to the Council of Sardica.

I have thus minutely detailed the statements of all the professedly orthodox writers who have written on these transactions previous to the appearance of the Athanasian writings. It must be clear to every one that they were as yet unknown in the Church, and that the facts which were as yet known and published completely contradicted

those facts on which the Sardican Council is founded.

In the early part of the fifth century there was another Cappadocian, named Philostorgius. His theological tenets were Anomean, that is, he maintained that Christ was not only not "of the same substance" with the Father, but not even of "like substance." He held that the Son was "unlike the Father." This person is said to have written a history of the events occurring between the beginning of Arianism and the death of Honorius, A. D. 424. He cannot be supposed, therefore, to have published it earlier than A. D. 425; but it is probable that his work was not completed so early. It is lost; and if we had it entire we should, I doubt not, see that it had been tampered with like the rest. Many and large extracts from it are preserved by that very extraordinary person Photius, bishop of Constantinople in the ninth century; but they are mostly on Arian views and history; and from them we may, I think, very safely gather, that he had not seen these documents. He confirms Gregory of Nazianzum in saying that the council at Tyre excommunicated Athanasius, and consecrated Gregory of Cappadocia in his room*; and this, I think, is the true history. He then states, that on Constantine's death, and Gregory's death also, Athanasius returned to Alexandria, making no account of the parties who had deposed him.† And the next statement which we read is,

* Hist. Eccl. ii. 11.

† Ibid. ii. 18.

not of another exile and the Council of Sardica, but of the exile when George was sent to Alexandria.* He is also made to say that Constantius yielded and withdrew George from Alexandria, who then retired into Cappadocia†; while in another place he directly contradicts himself, and says that Athanasius regained his chair only on the murder of George.‡ This is all the information on these events that is preserved in the writings of Philostorgius. The fragments of his "History" are exceedingly confused and often incredible.

Hitherto, then, I think it will be considered, that the Athanasian documents had not been seen, and that they are opposed to the facts hitherto known; and we have arrived at least at the year A. D. 425. When, then, do we first hear of them?

In the middle of the fifth century Socrates, a native of Constantinople, wrote a history of the Church. He wished to continue the history of Eusebius to his own day. He collected various materials for his purpose, and, among others, the two historical books of Ruffinus. He compiled the two first books of his history, depending mainly on the authority of Ruffinus, and the remainder he derived from him and other sources, and brought down his history to A. D. 439.

At this period he had never seen the Athanasian documents. Afterwards, however, although we do not know the extent of the interval, they came into his hands; and he was exceedingly startled at

* Hist. Eccl. iii. 3.

† Ibid. iii. 12.

‡ Ibid. vii. 2.

their perusal. He took them instantly for genuine productions, and naturally arrived at the conclusion that his History was sadly defective; and he re-wrote it.

This is his account in his preamble to his second book:—“Ruffinus, who wrote his History in Latin, has greatly erred in his chronology. He thinks that the attacks on Athanasius occurred after the death of Constantine. He knows nothing of his exile into Gaul, and many other occurrences. I, when I first wrote my “History,” had followed Ruffinus implicitly in the two first books, the remaining five I had compiled partly from him and partly from other sources, and partly from the communications of credible persons then living. But afterwards, when I had met with the writings of Athanasius, in which he bewails his sufferings and his exile, through the malicious calumny of Eusebius, I immediately felt that confidence ought to be placed in the statements of the sufferer, and in those who were living at the time of the events, rather than in those of persons who wrote from conjecture, and had therefore erred. [But Ruffinus might have been termed a cotemporary.] Besides having met with several letters of persons of note at that time, I sought as much as possible to arrive at the truth. I have therefore been compelled to re-write my first and second books, making use, however, of Ruffinus in matters wherein he is correct. This, however, should be known, that, in my former edition, I did not insert the deposition of Arius,

nor the emperor's letters, but only barely recorded the facts, from a desire not to increase the size of my work, and render it wearisome to the reader. But since, on your account, my Theodorus, this should be done, that you may not be ignorant of what the emperors have written, nor what the bishops, when changing by degrees the creed, have issued from the several councils, I have thought it advisable to insert them in the present edition."

Such is the account which Socrates gives of the time when he first saw, or heard of, these documents, that is to say, if he wrote it. But it may be a question whether his work may not have been revised by another hand. My belief is, that the original work of Socrates was re-written to suit new views, and that this was the mode of allaying the suspicions of those who had seen the earlier work. The History attributed to Theodoret is little else than a repository of spurious writings. It is, on all principles of common sense, incredible that the bishop of Cyrus, an Oriental bishop A.D. 450, could have written it. It is my belief that the Histories themselves are only another portion of that mass of forgeries with which it was intended to hoodwink the several Churches. At the time these documents were concocted or tampered with (whenever it may have been, for it is uncertain), the period had arrived when such things might be safely attempted. The Barbarians, like a swarm of locusts, were spreading over the empire. Peace and her handmaids, civilisation and literature, were leaving the nations. The

Jeromes, and Augustines, and Chrysostoms had no successors. In short, darkness was fast covering the earth.

I shall not, however, pursue the inquiry further; as to the age of these writings; it is not necessary for my purpose. No doubt can, I think, rest on the reader's mind, that it was at least a full century, but probably more, after the Council of Sardica, before these Athanasian documents, or the peculiar facts which rest upon their authority, were known. But if the reader will again call to mind the magnitude of this council, the excitement which it must have produced in the world, the letters which it sent to all the Churches everywhere, giving an account of its proceedings; such silence, such ignorance, for so long a period, must strike him as fatal to their genuineness. The composer of these documents was quite alive to the suspicions naturally attendant on their late introduction. He felt its awkwardness; and the reader shall hear how he fenced against it. To the "History of the Arians," a work professing to have been sent by Athanasius to the monks, there is a letter prefixed; and at its close are the following remarkable words,—“When you shall have read this, pray for me, and exhort each other to pray for me; and immediately send this letter back to me; give no one, on any account, a copy of it, nor copy it yourselves; but, like good money-changers, be satisfied with the perusal; for it is not safe that our childish and unlearned letters should reach posterity.” Could forgery be more

clearly indicated? If Athanasius had written the letter he might indeed have been ashamed of it; not, however, on account of its childishness and want of learning, but because it was disgraceful to him in every way. It is a libel on his intellect, for he was doubtless a person of high order of mind, and still more disgraceful to him as a prelate. Describe it in plain English, and it is a piece of profane and vulgar fanaticism.

Being quite aware how disagreeable and uninteresting such inquiries as I am now making are felt to be by the general reader, I have endeavoured to let him see, as we were proceeding, what I was aiming at, and how I was succeeding, that he might not feel himself entirely in a maze of apparently irreconcilable confusion. I shall now endeavour to simplify still further these differing stories.

Premising that I hold the date of Athanasius's accession to the chair of Alexandria as quite unascertained, and that it is very probable that it was much later than the period assigned by the Athanasian documents (namely, five months after the Nicene Council), we will now first inquire what evidence there is for and against any banishment of Athanasius from Alexandria during the lifetime of Constantine.

It will be seen that Jerome and Ruffinus distinctly describe the attack of the Arians on Athanasius as taking place in the reign of Constantius; and as it is admitted, on all hands, that Gregory was not sent to Alexandria in the room of Athanasius till after the death of Constantine, and as

Gregory of Nazianzum, or whoever was the author of that oration, and Philostorgius both connect the banishment of Athanasius with the election of Gregory, they also must be supposed to have known of no banishment in the reign of Constantine. Jerome, Ruffinus, Gregory of Nazianzum, and Philostorgius, defer the attack on Athanasius to the reign of Constantius.

On the other hand, the works passing under the names of Epiphanius and Sulpicius Severus, both impossible from their errors to have been written by persons of any information, place the exile in the reign of Constantine.

As it will be seen hereafter that the authority of these two latter writings is nothing, it will follow that all the evidence is in favour of the Council of Tyre having been held in the reign of Constantius, and that it may with probability be transferred to the year A.D. 339.

I will now state the number of persecutions these writers speak of as sustained by Athanasius:—

Gregory of Nazianzum states most distinctly that there were but three. The first when Gregory was sent, the second when George was sent, and the third under Julian.

Jerome, Epiphanius, Ruffinus, and Philostorgius, only speak of two; that is, the two former of the three named by Gregory of Nazianzum.

Sulpicius Severus only speaks of one; the first of those before mentioned.

Let it, however, be observed, as a matter of the greatest importance, that the historians are per-

fectly unanimous in rejecting the intermediate exile consequent upon the Council of Antioch, A. D. 341, which is the staple of the Athanasian writings, and on which their Sardican Council is founded.

What authority then, it may be asked, is there for the evidence of this Council besides the Athanasian documents, which do not seem to have been known till more than a century after it was held ?

It may be answered, that it appears in several writings, to which are attached the names of prelates and others, who lived prior to the middle of the fifth century. But I believe that I shall be able to show that those documents are spurious. Requesting therefore, again, the reader's patience, and the exercise of his common sense, I shall resume my inquiries.

Before, however, I enter upon them, I feel it right to state that the Sardican Council appears four times in the Donatist controversial writings of Augustine. I enter into no discussion of those writings at present ; but, that the reader may know all about the Council, I give the account.

Augustine was born in a small town on the east of Numidia, about the year A. D. 354 ; that is, about seven years after the time usually assigned for the celebration of the council. When he was about thirty years old, he went into Italy, and remained there some years. He is supposed, A. D. 386, to have given his name as a catechumen to Ambrose, bishop of Milan ; and, A. D. 387, to have been baptized. He then went to Rome, and re-

mained there a year before he returned into Africa. In A.D. 391 he was ordained a presbyter, and he became bishop of Hippo, A.D. 395.

He had an intimate friend, one Alypius, who had recently been consecrated bishop of a neighbouring city. Alypius had been with Augustine in Italy, and was baptized along with him at Milan. He is said to have been afterwards in Palestine, and with Jerome.

Both these bishops, therefore, might be expected to know at least the more remarkable events of recent Church history; and especially so, if what they saw around them in their day would necessarily lead to a frequent recollection of events which had occurred previously. This would be the case during their residence at Milan. Their friend Ambrose was about that time suffering the same kind of trouble from Justina, the Arian empress, that Athanasius had suffered from Constantius.

It so happened, at least it is said to have happened, that two or three years after Augustine had been made bishop of Hippo, these two prelates were on their way to Cirta, to elect and consecrate a bishop of that city. They passed through a city called Tuburcum, or some such name. It had been previously told Augustine that Fortunius, its bishop, a Donatist, was a moderate man, and would have no objection at any time to converse with him, and do what lay in his power to compose the unhappy disputes which were ruining the Church of Africa. Although they were in a great

hurry, yet Augustine and Alypius determined to suspend their journey for a while, and see him. They did so ; and he kindly received them. It soon became noised abroad that Augustine and Alypius were in the house of Fortunius ; and a large concourse of the citizens, as well as several persons belonging to Augustine and Alypius, assembled to hear the disputation which they expected would take place. At first it was rather a riotous and disorderly party ; but at length, when silence had been obtained, and attention given, the controversy commenced, and lasted for some time. In the course of it, to ward off from his party the want of Catholicity, and to show that there had been a communion between the Oriental Churches and the Donatists, Fortunius produced a roll. This roll contained a letter from a Sardican Council. Among other persons to whom it was directed was one Donatus ; but there was no proof to show that he was an African. It had no date ; no consul was mentioned. Alypius whispered to Augustine that there was a rumour that the Arians had at one time sought the Donatist communion. On hearing this, Augustine took up the volume to examine its contents, and found that in it Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, a strenuous opponent of the Arians, and Julius, bishop of Rome, also a Catholic, were condemned. He came to the conclusion, therefore, that this was a council of Arians whom these two Catholic bishops had strongly resisted. To make sure on this point, he asked leave to take it away with him, which was refused.

He then asked to have a copy of it; but this was also refused.*

From this account, if genuine, it is quite clear that these two prelates, Augustine and Alypius, had never heard of this Sardican Council. If any account of it had ever reached their ears, they would not have been in any doubt of the nature of the council, nor who were the Donatist correspondents; nor would they have asked to take the roll away with them, to learn when the council had been held. The least whisper of that œcumenical name would have told them the whole story; and they would have replied — “Yes; you may have such a letter, but they who wrote it were Arians, who fled from the council, shrinking from the investigation of their horrible crimes and impieties. These men were condemned by three hundred and forty-four Catholic prelates out of thirty-five different provinces.”

But there is something still more astonishing, if the Sardican council and this story be true. Cresconius, a Donatist, a few years after this meeting, is said to have attacked a little book which Augustine had written against Petilian, another Donatist. So little was the Athanasian account of the Sardican Council known, that he introduces this letter as a proof of Oriental communion with his party, and condemnation of the traditors and those who communicated with them. When there was so palpable a refutation, this, of itself, is singular.

* August. Epist. 11.

But if all this story be true, it cannot be imagined that Augustine's curiosity about this synodal letter left him when he quitted the house of Fortunius. He would naturally be making inquiries about it; he was seeking every weapon to disarm the Donatists, and restore peace to his Church; and yet, eight years after that meeting, he had learnt no more about that council than when he left Tuburcum. In his reply to Cresconius he said — "Learn that the Sardican Council was Arian. A long time ago we had *it* in our hands;" alluding, no doubt, to the roll said to have been shown him by Fortunius at Tuburcum. It follows, then, that Augustine had learned no more of this council during these eight years than he had learned in the house of Fortunius.

I put it to the common sense of the reader, if this story be true, whether such ignorance is not utterly incompatible with the statement of the Athanasian documents, that thirty-five prelates of the African diocese had either been present at Sardica, or had afterwards subscribed its acts, with some of whom it is possible that Augustine might have been acquainted; and that, among the prominent leaders of the council was Gratus, the Carthaginian primate. His position alone in that council would have immortalised it in Africa.

Before I enter upon these inquiries, I wish the reader distinctly to understand that I do not pretend to say why, or by whom, the several documents which I am going to notice were written. An inquiry of that nature would lead to much dis-

cussion very foreign to the purpose of this book. I only seek to show that they were not written by the parties whose names they bear. Until that is done, they may be brought against me as proofs that the Sardican Council was known in the fourth century, and soon after it is said to have taken place. Their authority, at present, rests on their author; and if I show that they cannot be supposed, with any regard to reason and common sense, to be the production of the persons whose names they bear, those who would maintain them must show whose works they really are, or at least bring evidence that they were known before the Athanasian documents had appeared.

§ 1. EPIPHANIUS.

THE first document which I shall examine is a synodal letter, professing to have issued from a council held at Ancyra, in Galatia, in or about A.D. 358. It is found in a work on "Heresies," said to have been written by Epiphanius, the learned bishop of Constantia, in Cyprus.

We are informed* that when Eudoxius had possessed himself, by court favour, of the see of Antioch, he openly avowed the heresy of Ætius, which styled the Son unlike the Father; and convened a council, in which the terms, "of the same substance" and "of like substance," were equally repudiated, on the professed ground that the

* Sozom. Hist. Eccl. iv. 13.

Western bishops had lately published a similar creed. This alluded to the Sirmian Creed, which is said to have been signed by the aged Hosius, bishop of Cordova, along with other Western prelates. The synod thus convened by Eudoxius sent a letter of thanks to the well known Valens, Ursacius, and Germinius, Arian prelates, for their laudable and successful efforts for the improvement of the Western faith.

Some of the clergy of the Church at Antioch are then said to have opposed these proceedings, and to have been in consequence expelled by Eudoxius. The ejected parties made their complaints known to George, bishop of Laodicea, one of the Oriental bishops; and he immediately sent them with a letter to Basil, bishop of Ancyra, in Galatia. It is said that at that time Basil was dedicating a church at Ancyra; and, as was usual on such occasions, some of the neighbouring prelates were assembled. The bishop of Laodicea's letter was short, and to the effect that the heresy of Ætius was rapidly invading the Church of Antioch; and that, unless measures were very speedily taken, not merely that important city, but the whole Church, would be in danger of making shipwreck of its faith. He therefore recommended them immediately to write a letter to Eudoxius, which should be signed by those present, and also handed about for signatures in the country *, insisting upon the

* This mode of proceeding is several times spoken of in the letters which are attributed to Basil, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia.

expulsion of *Ætius* from Antioch, and the removal from the ranks of the clergy of all who had adopted his tenets. If they did not pursue his advice, he said, Antioch would be lost.

When the assembled prelates had read this letter, and seen the creed which *Eudoxius* had signed, they determined to communicate with the emperor. They accordingly sent to him *Basil* of Ancyra, *Eustathius* of Sebaste, and *Eleusius* of Cyzicum, beside one *Leontius*, a presbyter of Antioch. Their prayer was, that he would take care that the decrees of the Councils of Sardica and Sirmium, and the other synods in which the faith, “like in substance,” was settled, should be maintained.

The emperor wrote a letter to the Church of Antioch, soundly rating *Eudoxius*, and ordering them all to adopt the creed, “of the like substance.”

As far as we are able to judge, this was all that the historians had learnt, or those who framed this statement chose to tell, of the proceedings of this council, for a century after it is said to have been assembled; and even this, if closely examined, will be found so contradictory and improbable as to make the very existence of the council a matter of doubt. And yet we are asked to believe that, during all this century, there was extant, in a very noted book, a letter which had issued from this Ancyran Synod, of the length of no less than thirteen folio columns, and written by *Basil* of Ancyra, one of the most eloquent and convincing reasoners of the day. This is singular, and as the

letter contains a mention of the Council of Sardica, it must be here noticed.*

The claim of this letter to be considered as emanating from the Council of Ancyra, rests on the apparent authority of Epiphanius.

It contains two parts — a doctrinal body and a prefix. The former consists of eleven columns; and when its length, style, and incomprehensibility are duly considered, it stands, I think, unrivalled among synodal letters. I shall not meddle with it, although it professes to be the composition of so eloquent a man.

The prefix is more tangible. It is, in fact, nothing but a heading put to a doctrinal composition; but it seems to furnish grounds for the following objections:—

1. It is directed to no one bishop or bishops in particular. Synodal letters have a special direction.

2. The document is evidently no synodal letter at all. While the prefix is in the persons of a synod, the body is written sometimes in the person of one individual.

3. It contains the following unintelligible statements; which, even if the accounts of the Sardican Council be true, cannot be reconciled with them.

“We hoped that, after the fiery trial of the ecclesiastical faith; after what had occurred at Constantinople respecting Marcellus; after the

* Epiph. Hæres. 73.

exposition of the faith at the synod of Antioch, and again at Sardica, and the faith which there again flourished; and still further after what had occurred at Sirmium respecting Photinus; and after the reasons which we gave to the interrogation put to us, respecting those who dissented at Sardica with the East, that for the future there would be peace."

4. I should object, also (even if I could believe that bishops from several provinces would have been in another province than their own at the Easter festival), because of the reason given for writing to the bishops of Phœnice. It is in the highest degree improbable. They had before heard, they said, that evil disposed persons were seeking to scatter the seeds of impiety at Antioch, Alexandria, and Lydia [very odd localities to select and join together, since what we know of history leads us to imagine that at this time these evil disposed persons were everywhere]; but they had remained quiet, thinking that themselves [what had they to do at Antioch, Alexandria, and Lydia?] and the prelates of the respective countries would be able successfully to oppose their attempts. But when news had lately been brought to them, that efforts were making to pervert the Illyrians, they felt that they ought to remain silent no longer; and therefore they composed this most dreadfully elaborate and obscure letter, and sent it—to whom? to the Illyrians in the far West, to put them on their guard? No; happily they were spared such an infliction; but, to the Phœnicians

in the East, of whose danger no suspicion ought to have been felt, as they were close neighbours of the very George, bishop of Laodicea, the moving spring of these anti-heretical proceedings, and who might have been supposed to be in tolerable security. This is most unnatural.

5. I object to this letter, because the historians are silent both respecting it and the articles of faith which are said to have issued from the council. This is a fact very fatal to any belief of their existence prior to these histories. If these documents, or any of them, had existed, and been inserted in the work on "Heresies," written by the celebrated Epiphanius, or in the book on "Synods," written by the equally celebrated Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, books which had been composed almost immediately after the council, and had been in circulation for a century, they must have been known to the historians, and we must have heard of them.

It is needless, however, to multiply objections of this nature. Whoever may have been the writer of this letter, it is not the letter which Epiphanius (or whoever wrote this work on "Heresies") imagined to have been written by the Ancyran Council, and inserted into his book. He states, before he introduces the letter, that Basil and George (but what Basil, or what George, we are left to conjecture) had held similar opinions with the Pneumatomachi, or deniers of the consubstantiality and divinity of the Holy Ghost. "No longer," he says, "with shamefacedness, or with any doubting expression,

as is observable in their language respecting the Son, on which account they use the word ‘of the like substance,’ and ‘a creature, but not as one of the creatures,’ but boldly, like rabid dogs, they distinctly call the Holy Ghost a creature, and assert that he is of a different substance from the Father and the Son. And, that no man may say that I am charging them unjustly, I will insert two letters; one written by Basil, and the other by Basil and George, and others with them.”

The letter of Basil is the one styled the letter of the Ancyran Council; and its main argument is to prove that in no sense is the Son a creature. And with respect to the Holy Ghost there is not one word dishonourable to Him.

The argument is not on the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, but on the Divinity of the Son. At the same time, he says, “We believe in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost; not in a Creator and creature;” and although the argument is pursued only with respect to the Son, it must apply equally to the Holy Ghost, else the statement would not be true. The other letter contains the fullest acknowledgments of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. Any authority, then, which this document would have had from its having been accepted by Epiphanius as the letter of the Ancyran Synod is gone. But I beg at once to say, that I believe that not even the book itself, which contains that letter, was written by Epiphanius, bishop of Constantia, in Cyprus. My reasons are these:—

About A.D. 427 an African bishop, named Quodvult-deus, had requested Augustine, bishop of Hippo*, to compose a short account of the various heresies which had arisen in the Christian Church. Augustine, in his reply, showed the difficulty of the task. He said that Philastrius, bishop of Brescia, had attempted it, not omitting the Jewish heresies. He had described twenty-eight Jewish heresies before the birth of our Lord, and one hundred and twenty-eight after. He said, also, that Epiphanius, the well-known Cyprian prelate, had also undertaken the task, and performed it in Greek; but he had described only eighty heresies. "Now these," he says, "wished to do what you would have me do, and yet see how they differ in the number of their heresies, which would not have been the case if they had not differed as to what was heresy. It cannot for a moment be imagined that Epiphanius was ignorant of any heresies which Philastrius had described, as Epiphanius was by far the more learned of the two."

In a few months afterwards, however, Augustine undertook the task, and executed it; and in his preface he states that Epiphanius, who had not long been dead, had written a work on heresies in six books, stating the heresies in an historical form, without adducing any arguments to show their falsity. His books, says Augustine, are small; and if they were put together into one, it would not be equal in size to mine, or some others. If I shall

* August. Ep. 222.

imitate his brevity, you will have nothing more to desire or wish for on that head. But such is not my object, as you will see. If you look at the bishop's book, you will observe how much he falls short of what you wish to be done. You, although you desire the accounts of the various heresies to be short and summarily written, yet wish to have the heresies refuted, which he has not done.

With such a statement as this from the pen of Augustine, A.D. 428, it seems incredible that any one who had considered the subject could have been so heartless as to dream of attributing to a very learned man the very ill-written work which goes under the name of Epiphanius; while it is as opposed to the account given of it by Augustine as black to white.

But it will be asked, how is this difficulty to be met? Without doubt it startled his editor, Petau. "What!" he says, "Augustine to say that the work is very short; and if reduced into one book, it would still be so small; and, moreover, to deny that there is anything in it but a simple narration of the heresies, and no refutation of them. Nay, but so far from this being true, he is most profuse and close in his confutations." He therefore immediately concludes that Augustine had never seen Epiphanius's book, but only the epitome of it, which is to be found in his works. Petau should, however, have considered, that if Augustine had seen the epitome, as we now have it, it would have told him that it was the epitome; which most as-

surely Augustine's copy did not do ; and yet we have the clearest possible evidence that the account of the heresies now to be found in the so-called epitome was the book Augustine knew as the work of Epiphanius. He has translated the articles most literally ; and there is the same certainty that he knew of no other work on the same subject by the same author. The question, therefore, resolves itself to this, Could Augustine have been for the last forty years of his life deceived, and been receiving an epitome of a work for the work itself ? Epitomes generally express that they are epitomes, as does this epitome. But we will waive all this, and ask, Is it possible that a bishop like Augustine, a public man on the world's stage for years, whose residence was not confined to Africa, who had lived some years at Rome and Milan — could his friend and neighbour Alypius, who had been likewise, and for as long a time, in Italy, and had been also, it is said, in Palestine, and with Jerome, the friend of Epiphanius — could both these men, and all with whom they had conversed for forty years on heresy, and heresy was more the topic in those days than it is now — could all these have been receiving a work of a few pages as the substitute for a noted work containing one thousand ? This is most incredible.

Take into consideration, also, that Epiphanius was a very learned man ; and that the large work is so disgraceful, both in matter and style, or method, that it is a byword for error. The reader has already seen a specimen of it in the description

of Athanasius's "Exiles," a history belonging to the real Epiphanius's own times.*

Let him think, too, of Jerome's description of this writer's books: they are said to be "read by the learned for their matter, and by the unlearned for their language;" and ask himself whether he ever took up our present Epiphanius without disgust. I think common sense will instantly decide the question in favour of the true Epiphanius, and relieve him from the authorship of such a work, and Augustine from the absurd and not very creditable suspicion of having been deceived on such a point.

My solution of the difficulty is this: I believe that the smaller account of the heresies was the real work of Epiphanius. Philastrius, bishop of Brescia, followed him in the same style. Augustine followed both of them, amplifying the accounts.

At a later period some one compiled the present book, as if it had been composed by Epiphanius, and conferred on his genuine work (although with some additions) the name of a summary or epitome; and even the larger book has evidently been tampered with.

It represents Athanasius as smiling when Marcellus was talked of. It supports the Sardican Council, and also the story of Paulinus and Vitalis at Antioch.

Believing then, as I do, that the large work on

* See before, p. 259.

heresies was not written by the bishop of Constantia, any statements which it may contain about the Council of Sardica have no weight with me. Its age, and the name of its author, must first be discovered, and then we will look at it again.

§ 2. HILARY ON SYNODS.

I THINK I am hardly called upon to show that this work is a forgery. There is no evidence that any work on synods was written by Hilary, except in Jerome's book on "Ecclesiastical Writers," and the title of this work is not the same as is found in Jerome's list. Besides, although it contains a creed professing to have been published at Sardica, yet the writer of the book nowhere describes it as such; nor is there any other allusion to that council in the work. The creed professes in its title to be a Sardican Creed; but there is no evidence that that title had not been substituted for some other. It would appear, from what we have seen in the last article, that similar tricks were not unknown.

Again: the Athanasian documents deny that any creed was issued at Sardica; so it cannot be the orthodox creed: and they equally deny that the Orientals held their council at Sardica; so that they also could not have issued it. Who, then composed it? Socrates says that the Orientals held their council at Philippopolis; but this creed professes to come from Sardica. To say that the

Orientalists made it at Philippopolis, but called it Sardican, is an invention framed to bolster up a fable. What, then, is the origin of this Sardican Creed? I wish I knew. The knowledge of the origin of the creeds which are scattered up and down would be interesting. The author of the Athanasian writings, who introduces many, either knew nothing, or would tell nothing, about them; and the pseudo-Hilary has said no more. The documents are lost that might have thrown some light upon them. We must, therefore, remain in ignorance.

Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, in Gaul, is said to have been sent into exile in the Arian persecution under Constantius, A.D. 356, because, like a few other faithful prelates, he would not sign the condemnation of Athanasius, as it would have been the subversion of the Nicene faith. His place of exile is said to have been in Phrygia. This book, which is in the form of a letter, professes to have been written by him, in the third year of his exile, to all the prelates in Gaul and Britain, without naming one in particular. We learn from it, that, although Hilary had written several letters to them in his exile, they had never replied to him. He was, consequently, under the impression, that they had all signed Arian creeds, and was just on the point of setting them down as heathen men and publicans. At this critical moment a packet of letters arrived, which informed him that they had withstood the threats and violence of Saturninus, Arian bishop of Arles, and had rejected the

Sirmian Creed, which had lately been proposed to them.

This is the creed which is attributed to that much maligned personage, if ever he existed, Hosius, in which the Father is said to be greater than the Son—"in honour, dignity, glory, and majesty, and in the name of Father." This creed is supposed to have been composed at Sirmium, A.D. 357.

Among the letters which Hilary thus received were some which requested information respecting the Oriental creeds. They seem to have had no written creed at all in Gaul; not even the Nicene. Hilary says he had never heard of the Nicene Creed till his exile; and very modestly, and (if his statement be true, which is rather incredible, as it is said he would not sign the condemnation of Athanasius, because such an act would have been the subversion of that creed) with considerable propriety adds, that he is so exceedingly unskilful and unlearned, that such an exposition is too much to expect from him, as he cannot, without the greatest difficulty, explain his own creed, much less that of others. Moreover, he begs, by the mercy of the Lord, that they will not prejudge him, if he should seem to say anything heretical, till they have read his whole letter. Such language he repeats several times, as if he had considerable misgivings that his views were of a somewhat doubtful complexion; and surely, in a confessor of Hilary's reputed character, this is most unnatural and incredible. No man would be a confessor, and a confessor among

hundreds of waverers, who had not the clearest view of what he believed to be the truth, as well as a high principle of moral courage, to sustain him.

The statement, however, is incredible on other grounds. It cannot be doubted that he, as well as the Gaulish bishops, had known the Nicene Creed before A.D. 356. Even if we could suppose that the Gaulish Church had been happily so shut out from society as never, during the twenty previous years, to have heard of Arius, or the Nicene Council, yet when, A.D. 345, Athanasius had arrived at Treves, surely he would give them, during the year or two that he staid with them, considerable information respecting both the heretic and the council; and, as an inevitable consequence, on the creed. Indeed, the next paragraph admits it. Hilary says he will obey their expressed wishes, and present to them all the creeds which have been published after the Nicene. But this would have been the first creed to have started with, if they had known nothing about it. The history of Arius and the Nicene Council must have prefaced any notice of the subsequent Oriental councils. If, then, he does not begin with explaining the Nicene Creed, I cannot doubt that such an expression implied their knowledge of it; particularly as afterwards he enters into all the niceties of the *homoousion* and *homœousion* terms, which would have been incomprehensible to them without some knowledge of the Nicene Creed. These statements I take to be utterly false; and I hold it impossible that the genuine Hilary could have written them.

Among the creeds which he introduces and comments on are some anathemas, belonging to the Ancyran document, which has been in a previous article rejected; and he gives another statement of the origin of the proceedings of that council. We have already seen two: one by the historian, stating that, owing to the proceedings of Eudoxius, bishop of Antioch, George, bishop of Laodicea, in Syria, had written a letter to Basil, bishop of Ancyra, in Galatia, urging him, and the prelates with him, to interfere, or Antioch would be lost; and that, in consequence, they had sent a legation to Constantius: the other by the council themselves, saying that, having heard of heresy spreading in Illyria, they had written to Phœnicia to warn the prelates there against it. But Hilary presents a third. He says that, when the Asiatic prelates had heard that the bishops of Gaul and Britain had rejected the Sirmian Creed, they were so put to the blush, that they were compelled to exhibit some spirit, and oppose the Arian inroads, and that these anathemas were the result.

I am afraid that this account is deserving of no more credit than the others. If such a council was held, it was probably in the summer; and, if Hilary's story be true, we have to imagine that the creed there determined upon was conveyed into all the provinces of Gaul and Britain, and rejected by all at synodal meetings; or else that legates from all had been summoned to meet at some large synod, and had there rejected it. If the reader will reflect upon the time requisite for such a com-

prehensive proceeding, he will feel satisfied that this would not be done in the year 357. But it must have been so, if at all, and in the autumn too, as the news had reached the bishops of Asia Minor, long before Easter, A.D. 358. They had, in consequence, assembled from the opposite extremities of that country, at Ancyra, in Galatia. According to the usual course and character of synodal proceedings, this is not only an incredible, but an impossible story. Moreover, history, true or false, has no record of any of these Gaulish and British synods. This statement is the only authority for them.

But again; the Rimini Creed professed that the Son was like the Father in all things. If Hilary would have signed that creed, he might have returned to Poitiers as soon as he pleased with the emperor's permission and favour. But he did not sign it. Now let us hear the writer of the book on "Synods." He could have signed it. He maintains its orthodoxy. I prefer introducing the original passage for one or two reasons; one is to show the Latinity:—

"Sed forte parum proprietatis in se habere similitudo videatur. Hoc si est, quæro quo modo possim alterum ad alium nisi per similitudinem cœquare? Aut numquid non idem est, esse similes quod æquales? Si unum dico, habet et unici suspicionem: si similem dixero, habet indifferētis comparationem. Inter similem et unum quæro quem locum habeat æquales; et interrogo utrum similitudinis potius aut solitudinis res sit. Non est æqualitas in dissimilibus, nec similitudo est intra unum. Aut quid

differunt similes et æquales, ut ab uno iterum discernatur æqualis? Non sunt itaque dissimiles æquales. Et quid aliud possunt esse similes quam æquales, cum in dissimilibus non sit æqualitas? Prædicantes itaque, fratres carissimi, similem filium in omnibus Patri [the language of the Rimini Creed], nihil aliud quam æqualem prædicamus. Perfectæ æqualitatis significantiam habet similitudo, et hoc ex Sanctis Scripturis intelligendum est."

After giving a proof or two of this statement, Gen. v. 3., John v. 18., he proceeds: —

"Nec me fallit, fratres carissimi, quosdam esse qui similitudinem confitentes negant æqualitatem. Sed loquantur ut volunt, et blasphemiae suae virus ingerant ignorantibus. Si inter similitudinem et æqualitatem differre dicunt, quæro unde comparetur æqualitas. Namque si secundum essentiam et virtutem et gloriam et tempus Patris filius similis est; interrogo ex quo non videatur æqualis. Nam etiam hæc in superiori fide constituta damnatio est, ut anathema esset qui Patrem dissimilis sibi essentia diceret patrem. Si ergo naturam neque aliam neque dissimilem ei quem impassibiliter generabat, dedit; non potest aliam dedisse nisi propriam. Ita similitudo proprietas est, proprietas æqualitas est, et æqualitas nihil differt. Quæ autem nihil differunt unum sunt, non unione personæ sed æqualitate naturæ." (72—74.)

In plain English this tract is a defence of the signature by a *Nicener* to the *Rimini* creed. But then what had Hilary, if such were his opinions, to do in Phrygia? But he is in Phrygia; and now comes a very extraordinary part of his letter. At sect. 76., in a letter which he is sending (and which, in all human likelihood, would never have been seen in Asia again), into Gaul and Britain, he begins

addressing the Ancyran bishops, among whom he is living, trying to induce them to sign the Nicene Creed; and so continues till sect. 91. In sect. 92. (the last) he returns to his Gaulish and British brethren, and finishes with this very curious admission from so rigid a confessor, the glory of Gaul, the restorer of the Western faith, as Hilary is said to have been:—“Mementote exilii mei in orationibus sanctis; a quo me, post expositionem hujus fidei, nescio an tam jucundum est ad vos in Domino Jesu Christo reverti, quam securum est mori.”

I think the reader must have long since been satisfied that Hilary never wrote this book. But there is another, and I believe a very conclusive, proof of its spuriousness in the use of the word *essentia*.

Augustine, in the year 391 (that is, thirty-three years after the book on the “Synods” is said to have been composed), introduces this word, professedly as a new one, to meet the Manichæan heresy, of an evil nature; as thus: “Evil is destructive to nature; but nature is nothing else than what is understood, in its kind, to be something in existence. Evil is opposed to existence (*essentia*). No nature, therefore, can be evil.” For such a purpose he used the word *essentia*, calling it a new term for *οὐσία*. Even sixty years after the death of Hilary, he again, in using the word, makes the same statement, adding it was then becoming general. But, in the fourth century, we find no trace of it in ecclesiastical writings, except in this instance. Let me add that, to the best of my belief, it is not found in any of the

larger works attributed to Hilary ; and if he wrote the work "De Trinitate," the argument is irresistible, because he was writing that large work on the same subject, and at the same time. But the writer of this book of "Synods" uses the word *essentia* between seventy and eighty times in a few pages ; clearly showing that his work was written at a much later period, probably in the latter half of the fifth century.

This I regard as a conclusive argument against Hilary being the composer of the book on "Synods."

It may be said that Jerome has used the word *essentia*. I admit that it is found (without any mention of its novelty) in a letter said to have been written by him A.D. 376 or 377. But, supposing that letter to be genuine, I should not consider it as at all weakening my objection to the work on "Synods" being considered as the production of Hilary. It must be remembered that the word *essentia* was not originally coined by ecclesiastical writers. It is attributed to Cicero ; and Quintilian, whose compositions Jerome might have perused, had written a few sentences about it. Jerome, from an acquaintance with profane writings, might, therefore, have used the word to signify existence, without it being at all likely that other and less extensively read men had ever used it ; and it is, I believe, a certain fact that it was not used by the Latin Church of the fourth century.

But let us look at this letter of Jerome : it is

a very remarkable one. Instead of its being regarded as an evidence for the use of the word *essentia*, the word *essentia* will, in all probability, tend to confirm an idea that the letter is spurious.

They who have had occasion to examine the letters of Jerome must, I think, have felt some suspicion that a very large proportion were not written by him. They group themselves into classes, having very marked differences; and, when the spurious ones are removed, Jerome's character will rise in estimation.

This letter with which we are concerned is, I believe, one of several written by the same person, but not by Jerome. But, supposing it to be Jerome's, let us take a plain matter of fact view of it.

Who was the writer? and to whom was it written? Jerome was a native of Stridon, on the borders of Pannonia. At the age of eighteen he went to Rome for purposes of study and improvement, and remained there till he was about twenty-three years old. He then returned home, and afterwards took up his abode at Aquileia. At the age of twenty-six, that is, A.D. 372, he is said to have suddenly left Aquileia and gone into the East, where he remained eight years; and from the East he is said to have written the letter in question. The personage to whom he was writing was no other than the almost octogenarian bishop of Rome, the impersonation of luxury, whose feasts, not of charity but of enjoyment, exceeded in magnificence even imperial entertainments.

It seems very strange that two such persons should have had any correspondence; and indeed correspondence there does not seem to have been. But it is exceedingly unlikely that a young man, who had but lately finished his education at Rome, and was gone into the East—of whose acquaintance even, at this time, with Damasus (made a bishop when Jerome was twenty,) there is no testimony—should have written such a free and easy, offhand letter to the aged bishop; asking him to solve for his satisfaction a difficulty, which, had it existed, would have been perplexing the Western Churches for the last ten years; and desiring him at the close to direct his reply to him, to the care of the Rev. Mr. Evagrius, Precincts, Antioch, Syria.

I think there is ground for suspecting the genuineness of this impertinent letter. If not, the expression of Damasus's countenance, on hearing his secretary read it, must have furnished a subject worthy of Hogarth's pencil. When there is nothing but forgery, as is too often the case in these investigations, to deal with, it is sometimes extremely difficult to prove a forgery. But I think it may be done in this instance. It is a satisfactory circumstance that, while these forgeries all support and dove-tail with each other, their facts are unknown to genuine documents.

Meletius is said, in forged writings, to have been elected by the Arians, bishop of Antioch, in A. D. 361; and, although he had adopted the Nicene Creed, never to have been acknowledged by the Roman or Western prelates. Instead of him, they

had (according to some forgeries, put forth in the name of Basil) acknowledged, in A.D. 375, Paulinus, a supposed presbyter of Eustathius, who had been ordained bishop of Antioch by Lucifer, bishop of Carali, in A.D. 362. But this letter of Jerome to Damasus, according to Vallars, the editor of Jerome's works, must have been written A.D. 376. At the time, therefore, that Jerome is supposed to have been writing this letter, and for a year previously, Damasus, the Roman bishop, had practically and publicly answered Jerome's question; which was this, Should he give his communion to Meletius, Paulinus, or Vitalis, who were each seeking it, on the ground that they were in communion with Damasus? If these documents be true in other matters, there could have been no doubt at Antioch who was in communion with Rome.

Again: the Vitalis mentioned in it is represented elsewhere as having been a presbyter of Meletius, who had adopted the tenets of Apollinaris; and he is supposed, at this time, to have been already consecrated bishop of Antioch by Apollinaris; a man who, it is most likely, was never more than a Reader in the church. The Basilian forgeries countenance this idea; and no doubt the writer of this letter intended it to be understood that all were bishops. Few facts of the Apollinarian heresy have come down to us, because perhaps, beyond the simple ones which we do know, there were none to be told. Apollinaris broached his opinions; they found supporters;

they were deemed heretical, and condemned. The heresy, however, has been freely used as a basis for Roman interference in the East. The forgers imagine its existence as early as the consecration of Paulinus, and interweave it with the spurious history of the Church of Antioch. Ruffinus tells us, that after the condemnation of the heresy at Constantinople, in A.D. 381, the heresy had its bishops. This, whether true or not, is an implied statement, and, so far I believe, a true one, that it had not possessed them previously. Vitalis therefore, if a real person, must have been only a presbyter, and an avowed adherent of Apollinaris. But, whatever he was, how could Meletius, or Vitalis, in their circumstances, have claimed the Roman communion? Such an absurdity is as inconceivable as Jerome's doubt. Besides, what had Jerome *then* done that they should be all fighting for him? Why were they so urgent to win this precocious piece of impertinence to their party?

This letter and the sixteenth were evidently only written to support the notion, that Rome had been the arbiter of the Church of Antioch. Two imaginary bishops were stuck up along with Meletius; and Damasus, like Paris of old (and the stories of his private life countenance the comparison) was to have the decision, not of their respective beauty, but of their legitimacy, as bishops of Antioch. Paulinus and Vitalis, as well as Evagrius, Paulinus's imaginary successor, are never met with out of the corrupted histories, except in writings evidently forged for a purpose.

The word *essentia*, therefore, which we may now consider as one of many marks of the spuriousness of Jerome's letter, for there are others, by making its appearance in such company, tends to discredit, rather than to support, the character of the book "on Synods."

§ 3. HILARY'S LETTER TO CONSTANTIUS.

AMONG the writings attributed to Hilary are two letters to Constantius, and one against him. Only two of them relate to this inquiry; and I believe them both spurious.

The following are my reasons. Jerome in his "Book on Ecclesiastical Writers" states, and there seems no doubt that he had seen them, that Hilary wrote a little work directed to Constantius, which he presented to him in his lifetime; and also another against the emperor, which was not written till after his death; and it is clear that he had heard of no others.

If the first and third letters in the appendix to Hilary's works (those which I am now examining, as they allude either expressly or impliedly to the Council of Sardica) be compared with Jerome's account of them, it will be found that they are not what Jerome was describing.

The work against Constantius, and written after his death, is lost. All the letters extant assigned to Hilary address the emperor as alive. The only question will be, was either of the two the letter which he wrote, and presented to him in his life-

time? The fact of there being two does not speak much for the genuineness of either.

The first letter is clearly a farrago of different writings. Although it purports to be a letter to the emperor, his majesty is very speedily forgotten. The remaining two-thirds of the letter are some historical medley of false and very doubtful statements; and, whence derived, no one can tell.

The writer had somewhere seen Valens and Ursacius described as young men. They are so distinguished from their cotemporaries at the Council of Tyre. In this letter, supposed to be written twenty-five years after the usually received date of that council, the same appellation is given them.

Independently of its not answering the description given by Jerome, it would be an absurdity to suppose this to be the letter presented to the emperor by Hilary.

The third letter would be still more so, as it is not addressed to the emperor, but to some [unknown] brethren.

It is happy for Hilary's character, that they cannot be identified as his productions. The small portion of the former, addressed to the emperor, although respectful, is querulous, and has nothing dignified in its composition, nothing likely to instruct the emperor, and win him, by reason and Christian feeling, to put an end to his violent proceedings. The latter is positively disgraceful; worse than the "*Historia Arianorum*" attributed to Athanasius.

It is agreeable to be able to produce another proof that these writings were not composed by

Hilary. It is believed that a fragment of the true letter is preserved ; and it leads us to conclude that it was a letter becoming a bishop to write and an emperor to read. It was didactic, and intended to win the emperor, who was regarded by many as not wilfully heretical, but a conscientious persecutor, to retrace his steps, by pointing out to him the error of his doctrine. This fragment is not included in any of the three letters.

§ 4. FRAGMENTS OF HILARY.

THE title of the work is, "*Fragmenta ex libro S. Hilarii Pictaviensis Provinciæ Aquitaniæ, in quo sunt omnia, quæ ostendunt vel quomodo, quibusnam causis, quibus instantibus sub imperatore Constantio factum est Ariminense Concilium contra formellam Nicæni Tractatus, quâ universæ hæreses comprehensæ erant.*"

Before we enter into discussion respecting these "Fragments" themselves, it is in the first place to be observed, that Jerome knew of no book of Hilary with that title. The only work on the subject which he knew he thus described — "*Liber adversum Valentem et Ursacium historiam Ariminensis et Seleuciensis Synodi continens.*" I am quite satisfied that this diversity of title indicates a totally different book, and that the real work is lost.

Such a statement, unless the works can be shown to be the same, is quite sufficient at once to overthrow any evidence for the Sardican Council

which the "Fragments" may present. At the same time, should I waive this argument, and notice them (for among the documents there are some belonging to the Council of Sardica), and make it clear that any of the fragments that are left of this treatise (if a treatise there ever was) are evidently spurious, it will not only give me a right to suspect and to require proof of the genuineness of any other of them that may be adduced against me, but it will be an additional proof that the work was not the production of Hilary, and, therefore, that the Sardican documents have not the authority of his name.

The work is a collection of fragments, professing to be the remains of what was once a perfect treatise.

The second fragment presents the synodal letter of the Western prelates of that council precisely as it stands among the Athanasian documents, but in Latin. It contains also a letter from the council to Julius, bishop of Rome. From these two documents the writer argues for the innocence of Athanasius. He then speaks of Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, and Photinus, bishop of Sirmium, in such a manner, as neither Hilary nor any Latin would have spoken; and so thoroughly confuses the history of that period, that, supported by other forgeries, he successfully defied the learned men of France in the seventeenth century in their attempts at extrication.

This fragment also contains the two letters from Valens and Ursacius to Julius and Athanasius, the same as in the Athanasian documents.

The third fragment is the synodal letter of the Oriental portion of the Sardican Council, the only record which we have of its proceedings.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth fragments are a series of letters from Liberius, bishop of Rome, with strange comments by the compiler.

The remaining ten fragments are documents professing to relate to the Council of Rimini. I believe all of them to be forgeries, but I have nothing to do with them.

In noticing some of these fragments it is useless to attempt to unravel their intricacy: were a volume written, it would be labour in vain.

It will be most convenient to begin with the fourth, fifth, and sixth fragments; that is, the letters of Liberius.

The fourth fragment is a letter to the Oriental prelates. It is headed, "To our most dear brethren and fellow bishops throughout the East, Liberius, bishop of the city of Rome, wishes eternal salvation."

Such a title stamps the letter at once as a forgery. No genuine letter could have been written with that title. The character of its contents fully accord with this beginning. He says, that having received their letter concerning Athanasius and the rest, which they had sent to Julius, he, following the custom of his ancestors [spiritual, I suppose], had sent Lucius, Paul, and Helianus, Roman presbyters, as his "legates a latere," to Alexandria, to the before mentioned Athanasius, ordering him to come to Rome, to submit to a

trial, and the sentence of the Church. He had also sent, by the presbyters, another letter to him, letting him know that if he did not come, he would be deprived of the communion of the Roman Church; that the presbyters, having returned, had informed him that Athanasius would not come. He, therefore, signifies to his "most dear brethren and fellow bishops throughout the East, that Athanasius is no longer in communion with the Roman Church."

This is a large stride towards the days of Hildebrand, and a practical illustration of the letter of Julius to the Orientals, contained in the Sardican documents. That letter, however, would have led us to imagine that the Roman bishop and the Orientals were breathing war and slaughter against each other. This letter, ascribed to Liberius, intimates that they are loving as doves. He says he has received the letters of their love.

Hilary's comment on this letter is singular. "What piety! What a fear of God is shown in this letter!"

Romanists admit its forgery.* There is no dispute about it; and this may suffice for the first noticed companion of the Sardican documents.

The fifth fragment is a letter from Liberius to Constantius, with the inscription, "To the most glorious Constantius Augustus, Liberius, bishop."

Such a title, like the last, raises a suspicion of forgery. In this letter he vindicates himself from

* See the note of the Benedictine editors of the works of Hilary on this letter.

some charges that seem to have been made against him by the emperor. If we may conjecture, they were the receiving of Athanasius, Marcellus, &c. into his communion, after their deposition by Eastern synods; but if so, it is clear that he has mistaken himself for Julius; for the facts which he mentions are the same which are attributed by the Athanasian documents to the Sardican Julius. They seem, however, to belong also to the Hilarian Liberius. He then assures the emperor that he has not acted from blind passion or vain glory; that he most unwillingly ascended the Roman chair; that they were not his own decrees, but those of the Apostles, that he had enforced [that would have been a puzzling distinction to the emperor]; that he had not allowed anything to be added to, or taken away from, the episcopate of Rome, but had proceeded like his ancestors; and that the faith he had received he hoped he should preserve.

All these statements are on the supposition that the bishop of Rome could review the decision of an Oriental synod. The letter of Julius to the Orientals is to the same purport.

The sixth fragment contains a circular from Liberius to the three confessors, Eusebius, bishop of Vercellæ; Dionysius, bishop of Milan; and Lucifer, bishop of Carali. The document itself has no names, designating the writer or the persons addressed. Its style very much resembles that of the Cyprianic letters; I think it is from the same pen.

There is a letter also to Hosius, detailing a mission of Vincent, the bishop of Capua, to Constantius; and informing him that Vincent had "fallen into that insincerity." It is singular that he should think of writing to Hosius; and more so, that if he did, and the letter had to go all the way to Cordova, he should have tantalised Hosius's natural curiosity with such a short and enigmatical account of what Vincent had done. In fact, through this reserve of Liberius, posterity is ignorant of the precise nature of Vincent's lapse.

Hilary then says that, after all that Liberius had promised and done, he wrote to the tricky Arian heretics, and condemned Athanasius, and adduces the following letters as a proof. The first is addressed to no individuals by name, but "To his dearest brother presbyters and co-bishops, Liberius, health." The parts bracketed in the following letter are supposed to be, and are given as, from the pen of Hilary.

"Your holy faith is known to God, and to men of good will, for its divine and reverential character. As the law speaks, Judge justly, O sons of men. I do not defend Athanasius, but because bishop Julius, my predecessor, of good memory, had received him, I was afraid lest I might be thought a prevaricator. But when I knew, when it pleased God, that you had justly condemned him, I speedily assented to your views, and gave a letter respecting him [that is, condemning him], to our brother Fortunatian, to be delivered to the emperor Constantius. Therefore, Athanasius being

removed from the communion of all of us, and his letters being no longer received by me, I say that I am at peace and in communion with all of you, and with all the Oriental bishops, or through all the provinces.

“For that you may know more clearly that I am speaking the truth in this letter, our lord and common brother Demophilus has benevolently condescended to explain to me your Catholic faith, which, after having been considered by many of our brethren and co-bishops, was adopted at *Sirmium* [This is the Arian perfidy. This is my note, not the apostate’s. The rest is *Liberius*.] by all who were present. This I freely have received. [A curse is uttered by me on thee, *Liberius*, and on thy companions.] I have opposed it in nothing. I give my assent to it. I follow it, I hold it. [A second curse on thee, and a third, *Liberius*, thou prevaricator.] And now I think that I can beseech your holiness, since you see me agreeing entirely with you, that you will all condescend to exert yourselves and procure my recal from exile, and that I may return to the chair which God has confided to me.”

There are two similar letters. One of them is to *Valens*, *Ursacius*, and *Germinius*, the Arian leaders. Knowing them, he says, to be sons of peace, and lovers of concord and Catholic unity, he, from no compulsion, God is his witness, but for peace and concord’s sake, which he prefers to martyrdom, writes to tell them that he had condemned *Athanasius*; and that he had separated him from the

Roman Church as the clergy would testify.* He also begs they would obtain his recal; it would be a great comfort to them at the day of judgment. He begs them to understand that he is at peace with Epictetus and Auxentius.

The other is to Vincent of Capua, whose mysterious insincerity he had communicated to Hosius. The first sentence is, under the circumstances, not unappropriate: "I do not teach, but warn your holy mind, my dearest brother, that evil communication corrupts good manners." He states that he had withdrawn from all contention about Athanasius, and begs him to summon the Campanian prelates, and induce them to interfere with the emperor for his recal.

Such documents sufficiently destroy their own character. Of the last three it may be observed, that, although men of much pride of heart during prosperity have often shown great weakness in adversity; as witness Thomas à Becket — who so brave and gay as a chancellor and favourite? who so proud as an archbishop? yet who so mean and abject when in exile? His thousand and one letters scarcely contain a manly thought, but are full of

* It must be borne in mind that these letters were written, in spite of all their apparent degradation of Liberius, by an advocate of the Roman see. Although there can be no doubt that Liberius was deposed, and Felix lawful bishop of Rome at this time, the letters proceed upon the supposition that he is not deposed, but in communication with the Roman clergy, and as if Felix was only a deputy. This adds considerably to my suspicions of the truth of the exile and recal.

the most degrading and disgraceful wailing. His whole thoughts are centered on himself; his Christ is himself. Still, in these last letters of Liberius, there is such a want of nature as well as of dignity, that, judging by their contents alone, I should repudiate them, as has already been done by the very learned Romanist, Galland, their last editor.

I have, however, another objection to all these letters. They exhibit a peculiarity in their style which, while it connects them together, connects also other writings with them; and when a strange peculiarity appears *primâ facie* to have been adopted by, and confined to, several persons, all flourishing at the same time, we are apt, on second thoughts, to suspect we have only one author to deal with.

The peculiarity I am alluding to is this. Take the letter of the fourth fragment—the acknowledged forgery. Liberius, wishing to inform the Orientals that he had received their letter, directed to Julius, containing charges against Athanasius and others, thus expressed himself:—“*Studens paci et concordiae Ecclesiarum, posteaquam literas caritatis vestrae de nomine Athanasii et ceterorum factas ad nomen Julii bonæ memoriæ episcopi accepi.*”

This strange, pleonastic use of the word “*nomen*” pervades all these letters, except that which I have characterised as the Cyprianic one. It is also to be found in the recantation of Valens and Ursacius to Julius, acknowledging their offences against Athanasius; also in a most improbable letter from the Milanese Council to Eusebius, bishop of

Vercellæ; also in a paragraph attached to Phœbadius's work against the Arians, introducing the name of Hosius in connection with the Sardican Council; also in some interpolations in Jerome's "Book on Ecclesiastical Writers;" also once in Ruffinus's "Church History." Confining our attention to the letters, which must all have been originally written in Latin, these, if any confidence is to be placed in them, are the originals. But it is not to be believed that this extraordinary pleonasm would be used by Liberius, by Valens and Ursacius, and by the scribe of the Milanese Council, &c. The letters show one writer; and this external peculiarity confirms their internal character of being forgeries.

But it is among such documents as these that the notices and documents of the Sardican Council are found.

I will now introduce an extract from the second fragment, adding a few notes to show how impossible it is that Hilary could have written it:—

"Superest ut quid de Marcello et Photino gestum sit paucissimis dicam."

19. "Photinus Sirmiensis episcopus fuit a Marcello imbutus: nam et diaconus sub eo aliquando fuit. Hic corruptis innocentiae moribus ac disciplinis turbare evangelicam veritatem persistebat novis prædicationibus. Et hoc ita sæpe est, ut cum incrementa vitiorum detrimenta in amore Dei fecerunt, vesanum depravatæ scientiæ studium increseat. Igitur ad tollendum ex episcopatu Photinum, qui ante biennium jam in Mediolanensi synodo erat hæreticus damnatus, ex plurimis provinciis congregantur sacerdotes, hoc magis solliciti atque anxii turbare rursum

miscerique omnia, quod jampridem plures episcopos reos vel falsorum in Athanasio judiciorum, vel communionis hæresis Arianæ, ab ecclesia fuerat necesse resecure. Quam opportunitatem nacti Ursacius et Valens Romanæ plebis episcopum adeunt, recipi se in Ecclesiam deprecantur, et in communionem per veniam admitti rogant. Julius ex consilio veniam quam orabant impertit; ut cum lucro Catholicæ Ecclesiæ vires quoque detraheret Arianis; cum eos, qui unitatem ante turbaverunt, consilii hujus et audaciæ penitentes in communionem catholicam per veniam reconciliatæ pacis admitteret.

20. "Et quia non est nisi de veritate confessio, nisi de vitio pœnitentia, nisi venia de admissio, Valens et Ursacius admittendi, ut orabant, in communionem, de Athanasii innocentia, de judicii falsitate, de Arianæ hæresis piaculo, talibus literis ante profitentur."

Then follows the letter translated hereafter, in which is the pleonastic use of "nomen," "de nomine Athanasii" being used for "de Athanasio." At the end is

"Hæc epistola post biennium missa est quam hæresis Photini a Romanis damnata est."

Then follows the letter to Athanasius from the same parties, also translated hereafter. It then proceeds, —

"Superioribus igitur literis datis, venia indulgetur orantibus, reditus ad catholicam fidem cum communione donatur: maxime cum Sardicensis Synodi veritatem ipsæ orantium veniam literæ continerent.

21. "Verum inter hæc Sirmium convenitur. Photinus hæreticus comprehensus, olim reus pronuntiatus, et a communione jampridem unitatis abscissus, nec tum quidem per factionem populi potuit amoveri. Sed idem Athanasius

Marcellum qui post recitationem libri quem scriptum ediderat (nam hunc nos quoque habemus) sententiâ synodi Sardicensis episcopatu erat reditus, ubi quædam alia nova miscere sensit, et ambiguis prædicationibus ejus in quam Photinus erupit doctrinæ viam quærere*, a sua communione separat anteriore tempore quam Photinus arguitur†, præventam judicio meditationem corruptæ voluntatis ostendens, et non ex libri editione condemnans. Sed quia promptum est ex bono malum effici, præbuit non illis quæ in Marcellum gesta ante fuerant, sed his quæ in Photinum gerenda erant, auctoritatem.

22. " Illud autem esse cognitum cunctis oportet, nullam unquam adversus Marcellum præter eam quæ Sardicensibus est dissoluta sententiis, deinceps synodum fuisse contractam‡, neque tunc cum de Photino decretum ab Occidentalibus est et ad Orientales est relatum, aliquod in eum expressum fuisse judicium, sed homines mente callidos ingenio subtiles malitia pertinaces occasionem revolvendi ejus quod Athanasii absolutione est dissolutum, quæsiisse judicii; et rescribentes de Photino Marcelli mentionem velut institutionum talium magistri addidisse: ut mortuam de Athanasio ipso jam tempore quæstionem et veritatis

* So far from Marcellus following in the track of Photinus, the writer has just told us that Marcellus had corrupted Photinus, when his deacon; and if so, it was before his condemnation by the Orientals. A nice distinction is made by this writer. He will have the book good to save the Sardican Council, but he admits that Marcellus was a heretic both before and afterwards; and this from a Latin, who does not seem to have known or believed in Marcellus's heresy.

† That is, previous to the Council of Milan, and previous to, or about the time of, the Sardican Council, when they were both acquitted, and both in communion with each other.

‡ This would not have been the language used only thirteen years after the Council.

judicio consepultam, in publicam recordationem causæ novitas excitaret *, et subrepens per Photini damnationem Marcelli nomen inveheret. Exstat autem in superioris epistolæ [Sardican] corpore Marcellum ab Arianis, oc-

* Probably the question of Athanasius was dead and buried at the time when this treatise was really written; but, two years after the Council of Sardica (the time alluded to), Athanasius was scarcely reseated on his chair at Alexandria; and no person writing about A.D. 360, thirteen years afterwards, in the violence of the Arian persecution, would have so described the question of Athanasius. The name of Athanasius had, unfortunately, never been forgotten. Indeed, where was Athanasius at that time? Where he was is not known; but there is no doubt that his life depended upon his being concealed; and the prelates of Christendom had for years past been offered no other alternative than either signing his condemnation, or sharing his exile. Or, to come more closely home to the writer—Where was Hilary at that time? Was he not in exile? and why? but because he would not sign the condemnation of Athanasius. Common sense tells us that the text could not have been the language of the genuine Hilary under the circumstances.

Again: what sensible interpretation can be given to the “crafty, cunning, and malicious men, who passed no sentence upon Marcellus, but who, in their letter informing the Orientals of the deposition of Photinus, insinuated the name of Marcellus to introduce that of Athanasius?” Were they the Western bishops? Impossible. Were they Orientals? Then to whom were they writing? Their letter would have required no cunning craft to insinuate to Orientals the name of Marcellus to recal the name of Athanasius.

But who can for a moment imagine, that the Latin Hilary would, as the writer proceeds to do, enter upon a defence of Athanasius for separating Marcellus from his communion, on the ground of his being a heretic. The Latins of the fourth century do not seem to have acknowledged him for a heretic. His name does not appear in the catalogues of Philastrius or Augustine. There is a great mystery about Marcellus. He is a favourite tool in the hands of the forgers.

casione libri quem de subjectione Domini Christi ediderat, una cum Athanasio fuisse damnatum. Docetur etiam recitatione ejusdem libri innocentem deprehendi. Falsitatem quoque judicii Arianæ exstantis adhuc libri fides arguit. De Photino autem tantum sicuti mos poscebat ad Orientales epistolæ fiunt, non injuria extorquendi ut nunc agitur assensum, sed instruendæ universorum scientiæ consuetudine.

23. "Sed cur abnegatæ Marcello communionis Athanasius reus esse rescribitur? Numquid propter libri vitium Marcellus abstentus est? Testes ipsi sunt ex institutis ejus Photinum perversitatis istius initia sumsisse. Nam negata sibi ab Athanasio communione, ingressu sese ecclesiæ Marcellus abstinuit. Ita communio cum eo in ista fide de subjectione et traditione regni docet: negata rursum pravitate doctrinæ alterius ostendit. Ac sic utrumque viri istius judicium caret culpa, cum in data communione synodi sit secutus assensum; in abnegatâ vero, ipso se Marcello abdicante solo sine ulla synodi auctoritate. Verum omnis ista alterius causæ et doloris est quæstio. Et quanquam conceptis jam diu in Athanasium odiis suis satisfiat, in majorem tamen sceleris gradum molitio tanta procedit."

Let us now turn to the letter of Valens and Ursacius, who are said to have taken advantage of the Council of Sirmium, to go to Rome and confess their crimes. The letter is given; and at the conclusion it is added, that this letter was *sent* to Rome two years after the heresy of Photinus had been condemned by the Romans. Such contradictions are inconsistent with the idea of this work being genuine, no writer of any character could have introduced them.

Before he reads the letter, let the reader reflect that Valens and Ursacius had collected false evi-

dence to prove Athanasius guilty of murder and sacrilege; and, but for his escape and concealment for many years, he would, in all probability, have suffered death.

“Copy of a letter which, after the declaration of the Orientals, that Athanasius was not guilty, Valens entirely wrote in the city of Rome, with his own hand, and Ursacius subscribed.

“To the most blessed Lord Pope Julius, Valens and Ursacius, health.

“As it appears that, before this time, we have by writing made many serious charges against bishop Athanasius; and, when summoned by your holiness’s letters, have not been able to justify them; we declare in the presence of your holiness, and of all our brethren, the presbyters, who are present, that everything which we have hitherto said respecting him is false, and without foundation, and that therefore we most willingly embrace the communion of the said Athanasius; chiefly because your holiness, with your accustomed kindness, has condescended to pardon our offence. We declare also, that if at any time the Orientals, or the same Athanasius, from evil intention, wish to call us to account, we will not present ourselves without your knowledge. We declare also under our own hand that we now do, and always will, anathematise the heretic Arius and his followers, who say that there was a time when the Son was

not, and who say that the Son is from nothing, and who deny that the Son was before the ages, as in our former paper which we presented at Milan ; and again we say that we have for ever condemned the Arian heresy as we have before said (and in the handwriting of Ursacius). I, Ursacius, bishop, have subscribed this our declaration."

The other letter, directed to Athanasius, is headed:—

" Also the Copy of another letter of Valens and Ursacius, which, after a little time after they had sent the former to Rome, they sent from Aquileia to Athanasius and the bishops.

" To our dear Lord and brother Athanasius, Ursacius and Valens.

" The journey of our dear brother and fellow presbyter, Moyses, to you, most dear brother, gives us the opportunity of sending, from the city of Aquileia, our warmest wishes for your health ; and we hope that safe and well you will read them. You will give us confidence if you will write to us in reply. Know by these letters that we acknowledge your office, and have ecclesiastical communion with you. May heaven guard you, brother."

The mere perusal of these letters will, I think, satisfy those who have followed me in these inquiries, that they are forgeries. Gibbon has the following remark:—

“I have always entertained some doubts concerning the retractation of Ursacius and Valens (Athan. tom. i. p. 776.). Their epistles to Julius, bishop of Rome, and to Athanasius himself, are of so different a cast from each other, that they cannot both be genuine. The one speaks the language of criminals, who confess their guilt and infamy; the other of enemies, who solicit on equal terms an honourable reconciliation.”

And yet I think Gibbon has taken a very favourable view of the letter to Julius. They certainly confess that they have made serious charges which they cannot justify; but they could not have felt any sense of shame or infamy.

They had been parties to a false charge of murder and sacrilege. They call them serious charges, and they retract them; and then what? On the very ground that they have sought his life, they declare how glad they shall be to receive their intended victim into their communion, and chiefly because his holiness has pardoned them. There is not much feeling of guilt and infamy here, I think. Their proper sentence, and it would have been a merciful one, would have been deposition, exile into the Mareotis, and bread and water for the rest of their lives.

And if we look at their letter to their “dear lord and brother Athanasius,” who that knew nothing of the circumstances would have the slightest notion of the relative position of the parties? There is not a word of confession, or sorrow, or humiliation. They hope (if I have

translated it correctly) that their letter will find him in robust health; and they inform him, rather condescendingly, that they acknowledge his position, and give him their communion.

Well might Gibbon doubt of the genuineness of this production, and of a retractation which is founded on such documents. But, critically, there are other objections to these letters.

I. First, the addresses. Who was Julius or Athanasius? No sees are named; and we know that there were other Oriental prelates of the latter name.

II. The statement that a bishop of Rome had summoned bishops of Pannonia to give an account of their conduct, and that with his *accustomed* kindness he had pardoned them, is simply ludicrous.

III. And so is the statement, that if the Orientals or Athanasius should call them to account, they would not attend, or plead, without Julius being privy to it; by which, I think, is meant, that they would not do it without his assent; as in another spurious document of a similar kind, presented to Liberius from Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste, and others, which will soon be noticed. How could the Orientals or Athanasius call Pannonian bishops to account without permission from both the emperors? and if that permission had been given, how could Valens and Ursacius, or the bishop of Rome, or any body else, have said nay to it?

Besides; this letter, which professes to have been

signed at Rome, in the presence of the clergy, is said also to have been sent to Rome.

And another objection to this letter is, that it is one of those which contain the pleonasm of the word "nomen." The inference is, that the writer who composed the Liberian forgeries was the author of these letters also.

I will now notice the third fragment. It is described as the decree of the synod of the Oriental bishops at Sardica, which they sent to Africa.

It is thus directed: — "To Gregory, bishop of Alexandria; to the bishop of Nicomedia, to the bishop of Carthage, to the bishop of Campania, to the bishop of Naples, to Ariminiadenus, bishop of Campania; to the bishop of Salonæ, in Dalmatia; to Aufion, Donatus, Desiderius, Fortunatus, Euthicius, Maximus, Sinferuns, and to all our fellow bishops throughout the world, presbyters, and deacons, and to all who, under heaven, are in the Holy Catholic Church; the bishops from different provinces in the East; that is, from the province of Thebais, and from the province of Palestine, Arabia, Phœnice, Syria, Mesopotamia, Cilicia, Isauria, Cappadocia, Galatia, Pontus, Bithynia, Pamphilia, Paphlagonia, Caria, Phrygia, Pisidia, and from the islands of the Cyclades, Lydia, Asia, Europe, Hellespont, Thrace, country about Mount Hæmus, who have held a council at Sardica; eternal health in the Lord."

This is a very strange salutation in more views than one. It is very extraordinary, indeed, that none of the prelates, or writers, living in the

Thebais, Palestine, Arabia, Phœnice, Syria, Mesopotamia, Cilicia, Isauria, Cappadocia, Galatia, Pontus, Bithynia, Pamphilia, Paphlagonia, Caria, Phrygia, Pisidia, Cyclades, Lydia, Asia, Europe, Hellespont, Thrace, and about Mount Hæmus, even during the whole of the following century, mention this famous council; and this, although seventy or eighty Oriental prelates are said to have been present. There is no trace of it in the East.

But beside that conclusive argument, a document with such an address cannot be genuine; only one bishop with a see is given. Many sees are named without the name of their bishop, and many names are added, but who or what they are is unknown. It was sent to the bishop of Carthage, but without a name. The only one we hear of in other places is a Gratus; but he is a hero in the Western Sardican Council, so he could not be here intended.

Again: is this the original document? It ought to be considered so. The Africans were not Greeks, and there was no use in writing to them in an unknown tongue. On the other hand, there is no Greek original known. But, if it be the original, it was written (and we only hear of it in Africa) by an African. It used one word in a sense which is believed to have been peculiar to Africa. The word "exponere" with its derivatives, for "deponere" and its derivatives.

And if we look at its contents it would seem evident, that the writer had the Athanasian Sardican documents lying before him. It is impos-

sible that the two councils could have so harmonised in their abuse of each other. The peculiarities of the different races must have peeped out. It is a hurling back upon the Occidentals, with amplifications, of the missiles they were discharging against the Orientals. It makes, also, some unexpected statements. The Athanasian documents acquit Athanasius, Marcellus, and Asclepas. They were therefore, as a matter of course, in communion with each other. But this letter states that Athanasius had previously consented to the deposition of Asclepas; that he had never communicated with Marcellus; that Paul of Constantinople, another refugee, had subscribed to the deposition of Athanasius; and that now, when they had all been expelled from the Church, they had forgot what was past, and were all in one accord. The two synodal letters fiercely contradict each other in facts.

Such a document can never be sustained. Many more objections might be raised to the other fragments, but what has been said is sufficient to show that the documents are spurious; and that a prelate of Hilary's character and position never could have been concerned in a production that could have contained such fragments.

§ 5. TOMUS AD ANTIOCHENSES.

THE testimony of this work might, perhaps, be objected to on the ground that it is an interested witness. Sentence passed against the Sardican

documents is sentence passed against itself. It has the same father. They are from the same pen. And, on the present occasion, I shall only notice it with reference to the Sardican Council; hereafter I shall notice it again. If I give reasonable testimony that the document, as it is now seen, was unknown to Ruffinus, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret; and that, even if seen by them, it did not contain any mention of Sardica, it will be ground for a strong presumption that it was not so written by Athanasius.

The "Tomus" states that a creed with the name of Sardica is abroad, but that it is a forgery; and begs the people at Antioch to prevent its being circulated.

In the first place, Theodoret, whoever he was, could not have seen the "Tomus" in its present form, as he inserts the creed as that of Sardica (it is attached in his history to the letter of the Sardican Council) without saying a word against it. His editor Valois, in a note, observes that he cannot sufficiently wonder how Theodoret could have been ignorant of the forgery; or, if he had known it, that he did not say that it was one. In neither case was he to be excused. But I will relieve Theodoret from the charge immediately. He had never seen the document which now figures in the history attributed to him, and which is the basis of the section in the "Tomus ad Antiochenses." It was inserted into that document after Theodoret's history was compiled.

Socrates and Sozomen expressly allude to the

“Tomus,” but give so different an account of the council’s enactments, that they could not have seen it in its present form. They made no allusion to any Sardican Creed, or to any request of the council that it should be repressed. Valois is very plain indeed with them. I believe him, however, to have been as unjust towards them as towards Theodoret.

The Latin Ruffinus presents a fuller statement. What he says of this Alexandrian Council and its Luciferian consequences, which has only a passing notice in the other historians, occupies one twentieth part of his whole history. He who cannot afford space even to name the Sardican Council, to which bishops flocked from every province in Christendom, and whose proceedings one, if not two, emperors were watching with much anxiety, can spend two pages upon some very suspicious statements,—not the less suspicious because he notices them so fully. But the insertion (for such I believe it to have been) of the “Tomus ad Antiochenses” was made in his history before the Sardican documents had appeared. He, or his interpolator, had not seen this document as it now exists. Not only does it differ from his statement by additions, but there is no allusion to the Sardican Creed, nor to the warning against it issued by the council. But if he had seen in his copy any allusion to the Sardican Council or to its creed, with the fact of an order for its suppression, little doubt will be felt that he would have made some inquiries about the Council of Sardica itself. He

was probably alive when it was convened (if convened it ever had been); crowds of persons could have given him information about it, even if he could be supposed to have passed through life till then without hearing of it; and we should surely have heard something in his history of so important a council. But the council is never named by him.

On these grounds I feel morally certain, that the notice of the Sardican Creed was an after insertion into the document. It will be noticed hereafter in connection with Paulinus, the imaginary bishop of Antioch.

§ 6. LUCIFER, BISHOP OF CARALI.

LUCIFER, bishop of Carali, and metropolitan of Sardinia, is, I think, if a part only of what is said of him be true, one of the worst-used men of Christian antiquity. His ecclesiastical position, as well as the reported selection of him by Liberius to undertake an embassy to Constantius, when he was meditating his violent persecution of the maintainers of the Nicene Creed, prove him to have been an able man; and the firmness with which he endured the alternative, and submitted to exile rather than sanction error in others, goes far to persuade us that he practically felt the value of Christian truth. Whether, on his return from exile, he really refused to communicate with any who had signed the Arian Creed, or even with those who had received such parties into com-

munion, is, on many grounds, very questionable. The historians speak doubtfully; Jerome is silent; the notice of him in his "Chronicle" is an evident insertion. Perhaps, were the truth known, his name has been given to a schism with which he had no connection. But, whatever he did, if the story about him be true, he went to the grave, as far as his contemporaries are concerned, with an unblemished character, and with tokens of respect.

Nevertheless, and I believe entirely through the instrumentality of the forger, he has descended to posterity not only as a man of contemptible mind, but as one of the most atrocious libellers that antiquity can produce. Jerome's description of him is this:—

"Lucifer, bishop of Carali, sent by Liberius to the emperor Constantius, along with Pancratius and Hilary, Roman clergy, to plead for the faith, and ordered into exile when, under the pretence of Athanasius, he would not condemn the Nicene faith, was a person of great firmness of character, and quite prepared for martyrdom. He wrote a book against the emperor, which he sent to him to read; and not long after, under Julian, having returned to Carali, died in the reign of Valentinian."

No work answering this description exists; but, instead of it, there are several others out of which a selection can be made. One of them is conjectured to be the work in question; but why, I cannot say. Some of the others seem to suit as well, if not better. It is the only one, however,

which contains any mention of Sardica. But instead of being "one book against Constantius," it is "two books for St. Athanasius," and I will now describe it.

The writer, whoever he was, had taken up his bible, and scored every passage that could be used in reprobation of Constantius for compelling the bishops to condemn Athanasius unheard; and, after having arranged them pretty much in chronological order, had strung them together with the most atrocious abuse of the emperor that can well be imagined. He begins with the beginning. Constantius appears first in the character of the Serpent, then as Cain. Afterwards, large extracts are inserted from the Pentateuch, to prove that there should be witnesses before condemnation. These are interlarded with not very flattering pictures of Constantius's co-Arians. The emperor then appears as Saul, as Ahab, and even puts on woman's apparel, and you behold him as Jezebel; and thus the writer proceeds through the whole of the Old and New Testaments. The extracts from Scripture are sometimes a page in length; and the original matter which connects them contains no argument. It is a continued repetition, slightly varied, of the same virulent libels. The style of it may be learnt from the column in which the Sardican Council is named. (This council is only once, and apparently accidentally, alluded to; and Athanasius is said to have been unjustly accused in it of homicide.) In that single column, which is in the second book, the emperor is styled twice

guilty of sacrilege, son of the Arian heresy whore, profane, the offspring of adultery with a whore; twice he is called a blasphemer, a heretic, godless, a very great fool, wicked, a murderer more savage than the most savage animals, more cruel than all beasts, a liar, the son of pestilence, and a slave of the devil. All this disgraceful ribaldry is found in one column; and are we to believe that a book so written had been sent to the emperor? Certainly, if Lucifer did write a book, it was sent to him. The two facts rest on the same authority.

Such is the staple of the book; and I think it would be an insult to any reader to suppose he could imagine a work so written to be the production of a man of Lucifer's character and position in an age of refined civilisation. Happily there is no need to say more, as this work does not answer the description of it given by Jerome, who had doubtless seen it; and, be it likewise observed, Jerome had only heard of this one work.

But, as I said, other works of the same kind, and under the same name, have descended to us. The making of books on this principle was so easy, that it invited repetition. The same author wrote a book "On Apostate Kings," in which pictures of all the worst Jewish and Israelitish kings are successively presented to the emperor. The passages from Scripture containing their sins being interlarded with offensive references to himself. There is another letter to the emperor, "On withdrawing from Heretics," and intended to show how impossible it was to have any intercourse with him. In

this case, too, the doctrine is supported by most copious extracts from Holy Writ. There is another, also to him, intituled "No mercy to be shown to those who sin against God;" and another, that "We ought to die for the Son of God." In some of these productions the bishop is made to introduce the emperor as having noticed his attacks on him, and even as replying to him (a most inconceivable supposition, except it was to order his immediate decapitation for treason—and yet it is the same writer that mentions the Council of Sardica); and then he overwhelms the emperor again with more Scripture, and what, I think, I ought to call blasphemy.

These compositions finish as profanely as they begin. Two letters are added, as if written by Athanasius, in his exile, to Lucifer; one asking him to send him his books, and the other telling him that they were not Lucifer's composition, but had been inspired by the Spirit of God.

§ 7. SULPICIUS SEVERUS.

It is unnecessary to enter into a long investigation of the epitome of sacred history which passes under the name of Sulpicius Severus. I am weary of these investigations; and I think that a writer who could so travesty history almost cotemporary with himself is not deserving of notice. Could a person of any character for information have ever said that Constantine was perverted by the two Arriuses previous to the Council of Nice, and was an Arian persecutor; that he changed his views

in that council, and embraced the Nicene Creed—that it was he who summoned the Council of Sardica? But even if Sulpicius Severus had written a work called “Chronica,” this is not that work; it is what it is called, “A Sacred History.” That there were forgeries under the name of Severus, is shown by the notice of the work called “Gallus,” by Jerome in his Commentary on the prophet Ezekiel, ch. xxxvi.; and that Severus wrote any annals is only to be shown from the notice of Gennadius of a work called “Chronica;” and from a letter of Paulinus, bishop of Nola. But if ever spurious documents existed, those letters of Paulinus are such. Besides, this work contains extracts, word for word, from the “Historical Fragments” by Hilary (which have been already shown, as I believe, to be spurious documents), and, also, from a letter passing under the name of Paulinus, but by a very different pen from the rest.

Under these circumstances I think it needless to take up many pages in showing the spurious character of the work, commonly ascribed to Sulpicius Severus, and that it would not have been written by a learned person. That portion of the work on “Sacred History,” whoever may have written it, which follows the account of the persecutions, has been retouched, or largely interpolated, by a later pen; and not until after the Sardican documents had appeared, for, as I have just observed, it takes quotations, word for word, from the spurious work of Hilary.

§ 8. PHÆBADIUS.

ANOTHER document, purporting to have been written before the middle of the fifth century, in which the Sardican Council is alluded to, is a tract "Against the Arians," attributed to Phœbadius, bishop of Agen, in Gaul. It bears no internal marks, that I can see, of its author. It contains a laboured argument from Scripture for the divinity of Christ; and I think, if perused, the reader will clearly see that it finished with the anathema; that is, about twenty lines from its present conclusion. By another hand, as I believe, the author is made to start again, and say to this effect: "I am well aware that you can bring Hosius against me; but although he did well at Nice and Sardica, his authority is gone now." No writer, in my opinion, would have imagined any person bringing forward such an objection, and particularly the authority of the unhappy Hosius, against a laboured argument derived from Holy Writ, and have introduced it in such a manner.

The history of Hosius will be soon presented to the reader. I never meet with his name but in forgeries and the almost equally disreputable histories. I believe he was neither at Nice nor Sardica. I doubt his existence altogether. Besides, the author of the postscript used the Liberian pleonasm of "nomen Hosii" for "Hosium."

§ 9. INNOCENT, BISHOP OF ROME.

THERE is a letter from Innocent, bishop of Rome, to the Church of Constantinople, found in the eighth book of Sozomen's "History." Where it came from no one knows. Sozomen seems to have known nothing about it. But he says he accidentally met with it in Latin, and he translated it into Greek. A letter, under such auspices, can hardly be considered as any authority for its contents, if they are on a controverted subject. It is, no doubt, a forgery, and inserted to prove the previous existence of the Sardican canons; of which we shall hear a strange story in the next volume.

§ 10. LIFE OF CHRYSOSTOM, BISHOP OF
CONSTANTINOPLE.

THERE is another book which professes to have been written in the early part of the fifth century, a life of Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, containing a similar allusion to the Sardican canons, and clearly for a similar purpose. But as no one knows who wrote the life, nor when it was written, it is not necessary for me to notice it. I shall, therefore, not trouble the reader with any inquiry now into its character and contents; especially as a more appropriate place will be found for discussing it hereafter.

These are all the notices of the Sardican council that I am aware of, previous to the reputed time

of the histories, for I do not profess to know when they were first seen as we see them; and when the magnitude and importance of that council, as described to us, are considered,—the number of prelates from all parts of the world that are said to have attended it,—the interest which, we are told, was taken in it by the emperors, one of whom is represented as almost a defendant at its bar,—when these things are duly weighed, and it is further added that not only no knowledge of these extraordinary proceedings existed in the Church for at least a century afterwards, but that a very different series of events was known; and that the documents which contain any notice of this council are evidently spurious, my impression is that the reader will agree with me in thinking it to be a forgery altogether, and in believing that the letter of Julius clearly points out why it was forged.

NO. VII. ROMAN LEGATES AT THE COUNCIL OF NICE.

A FEW words may not be amiss on the Roman legates at the Council of Nice. I have no doubt but Baronius rightly interpreted these three signatures, and that they were all intended to represent the Roman bishop. They were Hosius, bishop of Cordova, in Spain; Vincentius, a Roman presbyter,

afterwards bishop of Capua; and Vito, another presbyter.

I will treat of them singly.

§ 1. HOSIUS.

THE accounts of Hosius, bishop of Cordova, are so extraordinary, that it is difficult to avoid viewing him as altogether a mythic personage. I am really inclined to believe that he never had any existence. He is first said to have been a confessor in the persecution under Maximian; but of that interesting fact there is no evidence beyond his own letter contained in the writings of Athanasius, from which an extract will be given.

He is in favour with, and an attendant upon, the emperor Constantine; but the only proof of it is the word Hosius, without any designation of his see, or who or what he was, contained in a Greek letter evidently inserted into Eusebius's "History," with some other African documents, by some other person than Eusebius, as they are introduced without any note or comment by him, and are not translated by Ruffinus.

He is then stated, in a writing of Augustine, on the authority of the Donatists, to have been deposed in some unknown council in Spain, and to have been restored in some equally unknown council in Gaul; but, I venture to say, it is all a fable.

Hosius is then said, on the authority of Socrates*,

* Hist. Eccl. i. 7.

and a letter of the Mareotic presbyters, contained in the Athanasian documents*, to have been sent to Alexandria by Constantine, A. D. 324, to compose the dispute between Alexander and Arius, in which he failed. Little confidence can be placed in statements from such sources. He is then said, in the Athanasian documents†, to have put forth the Nicene Creed; but their authority, I must be allowed to say, is nothing.

The next event in his life that is heard of is thus introduced. Athanasius says that he never saw Constans (who lived in Gaul or Italy), except in the presence of the bishop of the city in which he was living; and Hosius is appealed to as a witness of the truth of his statement‡; and if years and grey hairs give confidence, a very trustworthy one he must have been. He was then about ninety, and—bishop of Cordova in Spain.

Constans afterwards, when Athanasius was at Milan, sent for the latter into Gaul, that he might accompany Hosius (for the nonagenarian had come up from Spain) to Sardica.§ The place in Gaul is not named; but, in our ignorance, it seems like going from London to York to reach Dover. In A. D. 347, Hosius presided at Sardica, where he and Gratus, the Carthaginian primate, as we learn from the canons alledged to have been decreed by it, played the principal characters. What other councils he presided at we cannot now tell; but we may hope that they were not a few; for Athan-

* Apol. contr. Arian. s. 74.

† Histor. Arian. § 42.

‡ Apol. ad Constantium, § 3.

§ Ibid. § 4.

asius thus speaks (or is made to speak) of him — “What synod was there at which he did not preside? What Church is there which does not possess memorials of his presidency? Who went up to him sad, and did not return joyful? Who made a request from him that he did not obtain?”

After the Council nothing more is heard of him for a time, and the tomb might have been supposed to have claimed its long deferred due: but no such thing. Ten years after, he is summoned from Cordova to meet Constantius; but where the emperor was residing at that time does not appear. He is asked to subscribe to the condemnation of Athanasius, and to hold communion with the Arians. The old bishop's anger was roused at such an insult, and he rebuked the emperor. It would appear from Athanasius that the emperor yielded, and Hosius was allowed to return into Spain. But soon a letter is sent after him, at the instigation of the Arians, and he is again desired to sign the condemnation of Athanasius. His letter, in reply, is preserved by Athanasius, from which an extract will be given. This, however, was not satisfactory. The court party told Constantius that Hosius was exciting others against the Arians, and that there were many in Spain of the same opinion with him. When the emperor heard this he was angry; and having sent into Spain to make those (unknown) others subscribe, and finding them refuse, he sent for Hosius from Spain, and detained him a whole year at Sirmium (he is now a hundred years old); till at last, broken by age and suffering, he com-

municated with our old acquaintances Valens and Ursacius, but would not subscribe to the condemnation of Athanasius.

I am afraid, that on this last account it was that Athanasius was far too favourably inclined to Hosius. One who has quite as good claims on our confidence, Hilary, bishop of Poitiers and a confessor, and one who professes to have known accurately all that was going on, states in his work "On the Synods," that the old man turned Arian in his old age; and that, so far from being compelled to subscribe, he was actually the composer of the Arian Creed of Sirmium, and enforced its subscription on others.

Hilary viewed this creed, not as the result of a sudden change, but as the manifestation of the wickedness that had long been working in the old man's heart.* Two equally veracious writers, Marcellinus and Faustinus, confirm this view.† Who they were is not clear; they profess to have been living in Palestine. But be this as it may, in their petition to the emperor, presented, as they alledge, not later than A. D. 385, they enter more fully into particulars, and we learn that Hosius was rich, and that it was proved in his case, "how hardly they that have riches can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." They say that, being rich and fearing exile, he signed the Sirmian Creed; and that, as a reward, on his return into Spain, he was armed with imperial power to send every bishop, who would not communicate with him, into the

* De Synod. § 63.

† Libellus Precum.

exile which he, by subscription, had escaped; and that he was soon called to put his powers to the proof.

Gregory, bishop of Elvira, in Spain, was soon informed of Hosius's tergiversation, and declined, in consequence, his communion. This was naturally extremely displeasing to the aged prelate (Cordova and Elvira being cities in the same province), and he determined to see whether Gregory was made of the same soft materials as himself. Clementinus was the vicar at that time; and, at Hosius's instigation, ordered Gregory to be brought to Cordova. Fame flew with these proceedings far and wide. Every one was saying, "Who is this Gregory who dares resist Hosius?" They neither knew of Hosius's lapse, nor who the holy Gregory was. The court was formed, the vicar was present with his assistants, and Hosius sat with the judge; nay, being armed with the royal authority, he was above the judge. The one party rested on the earthly king and his authority, the other on the heavenly king. At last, when Gregory was so offensively personal as to quote Hosius against Hosius, the latter became so enraged, that he ordered Clementinus, the vicar, to send him into exile. The vicar, although a heathen, said he could not exile a bishop; that Hosius must first himself pass sentence and depose him, and then he would exile him. When Gregory saw that Hosius was about to take this step, he immediately appealed to Christ, the judge, and asked for his decision on that day, when lo! Hosius, just

as he was going to pass the sentence, fell from his seat and expired; or, as some say, was struck dumb. They do not positively state which fate befel him, but I would rather imagine that he was only struck dumb; and that afterwards, although more than a hundred years of age, he recovered his speech; for Athanasius informs us, and it is pleasant to believe it, that in his last moments he declared he had not been a willing Arian, and, to prove it, died anathematising the heresy.*

All this is extremely absurd; and, as I regard these documents which have passed under the names of Athanasius, Hilary, Marcellinus, and Faustinus as all spurious, I have but little doubt that if we had all the forgeries connected with this period before us, it would be evident that the biography of Hosius is in a great measure, if not entirely, a myth.

I will now present an extract from his letter to Constantius, as absurd as can well be imagined,

* The truth of the conflict with Gregory is further attested by a short note of congratulation which Eusebius, bishop of Vercelli, then in exile in the Thebais, sent to Gregory in Spain, in reply to one which Gregory had written, giving an account of what had passed. It is in Hilary's twelfth "Fragment;" and shows that if he was not much known before his conflict with Hosius, his fame was wonderful afterwards. Eusebius merely directed the letter "To Gregory, bishop." Eusebius desires to have further particulars of his proceedings, and tells him that a nameless deacon salutes him. This rapid and easy communication between the most distant countries, and under the most unfavourable circumstances, is one of the surprising charms of the fourth century.

pretending to give us one of the by-scenes of the Sardican Council.

Speaking of the Arians at Sardica, he says : —

“I invited them to come into the Church in which, at the time, I dwelt, that if they had anything to say against Athanasius they might say it. I exhorted them to take confidence, and expect nothing but a just judgment on every matter. I did this not only once, but twice ; asking them, if they did not wish to come into the council, yet to come to me ; promising them that if he should be found guilty, he should be immediately cast out of our communion ; and that should he even be found innocent, and prove them false accusers, and they should refuse the man, I would privately persuade Athanasius to go with me into Spain. And Athanasius agreed to those terms, and did not oppose them ; but they, having no confidence in their cause, declined them.”

Common sense will not allow us to believe that Hosius, had he really been as he is represented, could have offered such terms ; or that Athanasius would have accepted them ; or the Arians have refused them. Above all things they wished to be rid of Athanasius ; and, happen what might in the council, on such terms they were sure of playing a winning game.

But if the Athanasian documents be genuine, this is all assured fact under the hand of Athanasius.

§ 2. VINCENT, THE ROMAN PRESBYTER.

OF this individual, I think, we know nothing, except what is found in the Athanasian documents and the works of Hilary, and in Theodoret. His name is second on the roll of subscriptions to the Council of Nice as a presbyter of Rome. He is next introduced by Athanasius as a witness, along with Hosius, to prove to Constantius that Athanasius had never seen Constans alone. It will be observed that one of these witnesses lived in Spain, the other at Capua; while Constans was living either in Gaul or North Italy. He is one of the two prelates sent to Constantius at Antioch from the Council of Sardica, where they met with a very improbable adventure*; and most likely the whole history of Leontius is a vile slander. It has been seen that Liberius sent all the way into Spain to communicate to Hosius "*illam simulationem*" of Vincent's, which, however, he did not further specify†; and Athanasius states of him that Vincent declined his communion at Milan.‡ In his exile Liberius writes to Vincent to summon a council of the prelates of Campania, to petition the emperor for his recal.§ And Damasus and a large council at Rome in a synodal letter, which we shall soon notice, assure the Illyrian Churches that the Creed

* Athan. Hist. Arian. § 20.

† Hilar. Fragm. vi. See before, p. 314.

‡ Apol. ad Const. 27.

§ Hilar. Fragm. vi.

of Rimini had no validity, not having had the sanction of the Roman bishop [Liberius or Felix] and the man of spotless ecclesiastical fame, Vincent.*

I do not recollect to have seen any thing more of him.

§ 3. VITO.

HIS name, beyond his subscription to the Council of Nice, never, I think, appears, except as the presbyter of a church in which Julius held the Roman Council, which received Athanasius into their communion.†

If the reader has agreed with me that all the documents from which these biographical notices are taken are spurious, he may, perhaps, also agree with me that it is probable the Roman Church had no representatives at Nicæa, and that the council was Oriental.

The forgery of a second council at Rome, coeval with the Nicene, which has been inserted in this history, p. 51., may confirm this impression.

* Theod. Hist. Eccl. ii. 22.

† Apol. contr. Arian. § 20.

No. VIII. COUNCIL OF LAMPSACUS.*

It is suggested in the History† that Felix may have been bishop of Rome till A.D. 366. Any approach, however, to such an idea was very far removed from the view which the Roman Church desired should be taken of this period. While they have removed Felix from his chair as soon as possible after the rescript, A.D. 357., they have left us an account of the holding of a Western Ecumenical Council in the last moments of Liberius (in fact they have overshot the mark), at which some Oriental legates are represented to have been present. This we must now notice. The object of this fiction, as I regard it, was twofold;—to prove that Liberius was bishop of Rome A.D. 366; and also to show that there was an application to him from the East, on the ground of the purity and stability of the faith, as well as of the authority of the Roman Church, in order to compose the confusions of the Oriental Churches.

Among the prelates recalled by Julian were many who objected to the term “of the same substance.” In the Council of Seleucia they had signed the Creed of Antioch, and deposed the Arian prelates then under the leadership of Acacius, bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine. In the succeeding Council of Constantinople, when the Acacians were

* Soer. Hist. Eccl. iv. 2, &c. Sozom. vi. 6, &c.

† See before, p. 94.

the ruling party, they in their turn had been deposed and sent into exile. It is now said, that having been recalled by Julian, and some of them having regained their sees, they were adopting measures of retaliation.

They procured leave to assemble at Lampsacus in Bithynia, A. D. 364, and were two months in consultation. The result of their labours was the deposition of Eudoxius, bishop of Constantinople, the new leader of the Arian party, with his brother Arians, and the publishing of the following decrees:—That the acts of Eudoxius and Acacius at Constantinople were invalid, and the Creed a nullity; that the doctrine to be believed was the Homœousian, since the expression “like” must be introduced to distinguish the Persons; that the creed to be adopted by all churches was the Creed of Antioch, confirmed at Seleucia; that those who had been deposed by the Anomœans, having been unjustly deposed, should be restored to their sees; that if any one should bring an accusation against those prelates he should do it at his peril; and that the judges should be neighbouring orthodox prelates of the same nation, who should meet in the church near which the witnesses, who could testify to the conduct of the parties, resided.

Having made these decrees, they summoned the Eudoxians to give them an opportunity of expressing their contrition; but when they paid no heed to them, they published to all the churches every where what they had ordained.

It then having come into their heads that

Eudoxius might win over the emperor to his side, and bring accusations against them, they resolved to anticipate him ; and for that purpose proceeded to inform Valens of their proceedings.

They met him at Heraclea, in Thrace, returning from accompanying his brother Valentinian during some part of his journey to old Rome. But Eudoxius, like the cunning Arians at Rimini and Seleucia, had been first to the emperor ; so that, when they arrived, they received a short reply with an order to communicate with Eudoxius ; and when they talked of the fraud (that is the pretence that the Western prelates had signed the creed at Rimini) practised at Constantinople, and Eudoxius's anti-Seleucian decrees made in that city, he flew into a great rage, ordered them into exile, and commanded that their churches should be given to those in communion with Eudoxius.

All these proceedings took place before the war with Procopius. That war occupied the year following, and was terminated by the battle of Nacolæ, fought on the 27th May, A.D. 366.

After the usurper's defeat, the emperor Valens is described as beginning a persecution of those who differed from him in his religious views, and especially of the parties who had assembled at the council of Lampsacus, and who are called Macedonians. We are then told that the latter, agitated by fear, had frequent intercourse with each other by synods ; and, at length, came to a decision that it would be better to fly to Valentinian and the bishop of Rome, and be joined to their communion,

than to communicate with Eudoxius and Valens, and their party. Accordingly, Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste in Armenia, Sylvanus, bishop of Tarsus in Cilicia, and Theophilus, bishop of Castabala, also in Cilicia, were sent on a mission to Valentinian. They took also with them letters to Liberius, the Roman prelate, and to the Western bishops generally, on the ground that the Western faith was tried and firm, and derived from the Apostles; and that, before all the rest of the bishops, it was their duty to watch over the faith; and they asked them to aid the legates with all their influence, and to consult with them on what should be done, and put the Church in such order as should seem good to them. (I follow Valois's translation.)

The legates, on their arrival in Italy, found that Valentinian was absent in Gaul, and, despairing of seeing him, they presented their letter to Liberius. He, however, was by no means willing to receive them. He said the legates and their principals belonged to the Arian faction, and could not be received by the Church on account of their rejecting the Nicene Creed. They replied, however, that they had changed their minds, and now acknowledged its truth; and that they had already denied the Anomœan opinions, having confessed that the Son was like the Father in all things [the Rimini Creed]; and they added that there was no difference between the terms *ὁμοούσιος* and *ὁμολογ* (a fact which all the Western prelates would be glad to hear, and, coming from Greeks, the information would doubtless have more weight):

and therefore no surprise can be felt that, upon this intelligence, Liberius, having required from them a written confession, which they gave him, and in which the words of the Nicene Creed were inserted, received them into his communion. The synodal letters of the Councils of Smyrna, Pisidia, Isauria, Pamphylia, and Lycia, Socrates did not insert on account of their length; but the profession of faith which the legates presented to Liberius is given, and also a letter which he gave to them on their return. On leaving Rome they went to Sicily. A council was convoked, and the same decrees made as at Rome.

They then returned to those who had sent them. At that time, Sozomen says (vi. 12.), a council was sitting at Tyanaë; Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, Athanasius, bishop of Ancyra, Pelagius of Laodicea, Zeno of Tyre, Paul of Emesa, Otreius of Mytilene, Gregory of Nazianzum, and many others, were present, who, during the reign of Jovian, in a council at Antioch, had signed the Nicene Creed. The letters of Liberius and the Western bishops were read. The Orientals were delighted on hearing them, and discovering how unanimously they adhered to the Nicene Creed. They wrote to all the Oriental Churches, asking them to read the decrees of the Western bishops, and the letters of Liberius, and of the bishops of Italy and Africa, and Gaul and Sicily (for the legates had brought letters from these bishops also), and to reckon them, and they would be found far exceeding in number the bishops of the

synod at Rimini; and they exhorted them to communicate with the West, and said that they were of the same views. They appointed also a fixed day when all should meet at Tarsus, to confirm the Nicene Creed.

Such are the accounts of a very important legation which Socrates and Sozomen have transmitted. It is singular that their companion Theodoret, who is curious in marvellous accounts and documents, has not mentioned it; and I must freely confess to the reader that I believe scarcely one word of what has been stated.

If this story be true, there must have been congregated in different councils, or in one, at least five hundred Western prelates, all of whom condemned the creed of the Council of Rimini (which it would seem had not till then been done), and subscribed the Nicene Faith. What an excitement this must have produced; to say nothing of the sensation which the legation of the Oriental prelates would have previously created! I feel, therefore, on the very threshold of the inquiry, the greatest suspicion of the truth of this marvellous story, when I find that Ruffinus has made no mention of it. He is particular in his mention of the Councils of Rimini and Seleucia; and these proceedings were of equal importance, and far more likely, from the gratifying nature of their facts, to have found a place in his history. But, although Italy, Gaul, Illyria, Sicily, and Africa were set in motion by these councils or council, Ruffinus, who was living in Italy, and was perhaps

twenty years old at the time, had either never heard of them, or, what is equally improbable, thought them too insignificant to be noticed. Their only support is the "*Epistola ad Afros*," soon to be looked at, which is found among the Athanasian writings. And yet, even in that letter, although some of these councils are mentioned, the statements do not agree. These councils are held in the episcopate of Liberius; in the Athanasian letter, they are in the episcopate of Damasus. Again, these councils are begun by Macedonians and held by them in the East, to discover how they may protect themselves from the persecution of Valens. The signature to the Nicene Creed by their legates at Rome was apparently only an unwilling means towards an end. But, in the Athanasian letter, they are begun and continued by hearty supporters of the Nicene Creed, out of love of the Creed, and belief in its truth. They are two fabulous stories, ill assorted.

Let us first of all inquire who the parties were who sent this legation, and what was the object of it. A number of Asiatic prelates, who are called by the historians Macedonians, which means that they denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, being persecuted by their own emperor and his favourite bishop Eudoxius, both of whom denied the divinity of the Son as well as of the Holy Ghost, after much consideration, think it better to be in communion with a foreign emperor and his bishop who maintain the divinity, both of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Can any thing be more absurd?

Again, a year or two before, after a two months' debate, they had arrived at the conclusion that the insertion of the word "of the like substance," into the creed was necessary to distinguish the Persons of the Trinity. But they now authorise their legates to sign a creed in which that word is not to be found, and to state to the Roman and Western prelates, that not merely the phrase "like in substance," but Socrates says even the term "like," is orthodox; that is, has the same meaning as "of the same substance," a term which they had repudiated at Lampsacus as not orthodox, from its confounding the Persons of the Trinity. It will follow, also, that the creeds of Nicæa and of Rimini were equally orthodox, and the same in meaning.

Again, they send to Valentinian; but no object of this message is specified beyond a desire to be in communion with a person in whose creed they disbelieved. If they had requested Valentinian to intercede with his brother Valens in their behalf, there would have been a reasonable object, however unlikely they might have been to attain it; for it is hardly likely, if Valentinian cared much about his own creed, that he would take under his protection persons whom he would regard as damnable heretics, and if he did not care about his own creed, or any creed, it is equally unlikely that he would have been their champion against his brother. But there is not a word of this in the history; and in fact Valentinian is a mere blind. He is said to have been in Gaul, fighting with the Sarmatians. How he came to find them so far from their home,

we are not told. The historians are satisfied to put him out of the way, and there they leave him. The point of the story is the letter to Liberius and the Western prelates, which implied the former's existence, while it asked both to aid their legates, and to settle the Asiatic Churches as they should think best; and this because their faith was approved, stable, and apostolical, and the care of the Churches rested principally upon them.

But will the reader ask himself, What connexion is there between this legation and the situation of these persecuted Macedonians, under their Arian emperor? They wanted freedom from persecution; and the proposed remedy for all their ills is communion with parties in whose creed they did not believe. In what way could any regulation of the Oriental Churches, by the Western prelates (if such an absurdity could be imagined; for how were they to regulate them? what were they to do? had they got the permission of the Arian emperor?) have effected their object? Of what benefit to them could the signature (even if they could have signed it in a Catholic sense, which as Macedonians they could not) of the Nicene Creed at Rome be? It did not make them Valentinian's subjects, and bind him to their defence. No Western regulations in any way, but particularly in this way, made by the bishops unknown to either emperor could bind the East. In fact, the story does not proceed to that extremity of folly. All, I am persuaded, that was wanted, was to show in general the Roman supremacy, and in particular that Liberius was at Rome, A.D. 366, and that the East,

struck with his orthodoxy, were supplicating his aid in the management of their churches.

And what is the alleged result of this legation? Do the legates procure safety and freedom? They never seem to have thought about such subjects. They are curious in autographs, and apparently go about from province to province, holding synods and procuring signatures to the Nicene Creed. They seem to have forgot what they themselves were, and who had sent them. They are Macedonians, and were sent by Macedonians on account of the persecution of Valens; and they return, we are told, to those who had sent them: and these turn out to be Catholic prelates, holding a council at Tyanaë, to whom they present about five hundred signatures of Western bishops to the Nicene Creed. And this was the fulfilment of their mission, and all parties are wonderfully satisfied. Can anything be more incredible as a relation of facts, or more absurd as a fable?

Let us now examine the story more in detail. Socrates says Valens was an Arian, at the time of the application for holding the Council of Lampsacus; Sozomen says he was not. Socrates says the Macedonians asked Valens for leave to hold the council; Sozomen says they asked Valentinian, that is to say, the subjects of the Eastern emperor asked the Western emperor for leave to hold a synod in one of the cities of the Eastern emperor. To confirm his story, he gives Valentinian's reply, and little doubt will be entertained that the application to him was invented to introduce the reply.

It is not the only speech of Valentinian that is preserved, and for the same reason. Sozomen also adds that when the prelates assembled at Lampsacus had anathematized the Rimini Creed (whose term their legates, according to Socrates, declared at Rome was orthodox, and had the same force as the Nicene), which Rimini Creed was also, according to Socrates, the creed of their own emperor, they went to Valens to procure his confirmation of their acts. If that had really been the case, no astonishment will be felt that they are told to abjure their opinions, withdraw their anathemas, and sign the creed they had anathematised, and that on their refusal they are ordered into exile, and their churches given up to the Eudoxians, that is, to the Arians, whose leader Eudoxius, bishop of Constantinople, then was.

It need scarcely be asked, "Did they go?" Under a cruel Arian emperor it could not be doubted. But after all it may be asked, for really they never go. Valens, the fierce Arian persecutor, is among them; but they are all sitting quietly on their episcopal chairs. After the battle of Nacolæ, however (fought in May A. D. 366, in which Procopius was defeated), more active measures are said to have been adopted by Valens and the Arians; and then what do these exiled prelates do? Do they then run away? No. Strange to say, under the very eyes of the emperor who had ordered them into exile, and given their churches to their enemies, they hold synods at Smyrna, in Pisidia, Isauria, Pamphylia, and Lycia. Who can doubt it when Socrates had by him the

synodal acts, though on account of their length he excused his readers the trouble of reading them. It is a great pity ; for genuine synodal acts are the most instructive things imaginable, and there are so few of them. At these synods, it was agreed that it would be far better for them to fly to Valentinian and the bishop of Rome, and communicate with them, than with Valens and Eudoxius. Such a resolve might have been all very well if they had all gone in a body into the West to take up their abode there. But these persecuted prelates are made to mean nothing of the sort. They are to remain bishops of Oriental sees in the dominions of the persecuting Valens, preaching doctrines which he regards as heresy, deriving their income and jurisdiction from him, but all the while to be in communion with a foreign emperor and bishop. This may be a very natural state of things, but I admit that I do not understand it. It appears to me the acme of absurdity.

Having adopted this resolution, they select three prelates to send into the West, to pave the way for this arrangement. We will suppose them arrived at Rome. It must have been a large council which they had found assembled, or perhaps it was assembled afterwards, to meet them. The letter of Liberius to the Eastern prelates runs in his own name, and in that of "all the bishops of the West." We will suppose Eustathius to have thus addressed them, "We are come, most reverend Lords, from the East. We are the legates of the Oriental Churches. Our emperor is persecuting us. Heresy

is triumphant. Every thing ecclesiastical is in the greatest confusion. We fly to you all, and especially to you the most reverend bishop of Rome, to give us your influence. Your faith is firm and stable as your seven hills. It is the Apostolic Faith—unchangeable. On you, therefore, falls the care of the Churches. To you it belongs to arrange what is in disorder. Help us, we pray you; the whole East beseeches you in our persons.” This, in substance, is what the historians report to have been the contents of the Oriental letter.

Supposing such an address ever to have been delivered to such a Council, the countenances of the audience would have been an interesting study; and we may imagine Liberius thinking, if not replying, “You speak, my Lords, of our tried and stable faith: pray which faith do you allude to, for we have had two lately in these parts?” There would not, probably, if the reports are true, have been one bishop of eight years’ standing present, who had not (and not merely to save his life, but merely to preserve the comforts of his home, or the dignity of his office) abjured his creed. Their chief, even, if the Roman story be true, overcome by the recollections of Rome and its luxury, to say nothing of the ladies, who are said to have been so attached to him, that if he could not come to them, they had determined to go to him, had signed a creed which he knew was intended by most of those who presented it to deny the Divinity of his Redeemer.

Let us now look at the documents of this Council.

Liberius, as might be expected, was very particular as to the Oriental Creed. He shrank instinctively from any Arian contact. The legates, therefore, signed a profession of faith which he presented to them before they were received into communion.

Its addresses, it may be observed by the way, go far to mark its character. No sees are added to the bishop's names. But to come to the document itself.

It commences with a direct falsehood,—that the synod at Lampsacus, and all the synods, had maintained the Catholic faith, which, to that time, had always remained unshaken, and in which the word *ὁμοούσιος* was inserted. So far from it, according to the only record of these occurrences they themselves were unbelievers in the Divinity of the Holy Spirit; and so far from adopting even the language of the Nicene Creed, had, after a two months' inquiry, decreed that the term “of the like substance,” was a necessary word.

It declares too, that they, along with the three hundred and eighteen divinely inspired bishops at Nicæa, had always maintained the Nicene Creed, did then maintain it, and always would do so. And at the close there was added a postscript, in the style of the Sardican Canon, and resembling what is found at the end of the spurious recantation of Valens and Ursacius; that, “if any one, after this exposition of their faith, should bring any accusation, not merely against them, but against the Oriental prelates who had commissioned them, let him come with letters from his

Holiness before such orthodox bishops as his Holiness shall appoint, and they will proceed to the trial before them, and if found guilty submit to the sentence;" which was, by the way, though the forger, probably, was not aware of it, an arrangement in direct opposition to the pretended decrees of the Council in the version of Sozomen.

With this profession of faith is given also a long letter from Liberius and the Western bishops to sixty-four Oriental bishops. The names of some of the sixty-four, as far as we are able to judge, represent the synod as having been one of the most extraordinary on record.

Its president must have been Eustathius, bishop of Antioch.* It is the prevailing opinion—indeed there can be little doubt of it, certainly the Church of Antioch believed it—that he had been dead some years before this council. Now if really he had been present, and under such circumstances given his sanction to the creed of his own Church, and to the term "of the like substance," how could the bishops afterwards think of changing it for the Nicene? It may be replied, however, that he shortly after had appeared† at

* The name in the Greek copy is Evethius. Epiphanius Scholasticus, in his copy, had read Eustathius, which is probably correct, as by giving him precedence, a bishop of an important see was meant, and Eustathius had been bishop of Antioch. Valois imagines it to be intended for Meletius,—a very odd conjecture for him to have made. I suspect it has an origin in a desire to explain a difficult passage in one of the letters attributed to Basil, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia.

† Socr. Hist. Eccl. iv. 14.

Constantinople as a maintainer of the Homoousian Creed. Which of them he preferred, therefore, is dubious. Close beside him sat Eusebius. It could not be the bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia. He was thoroughly Nicene. It must have been either the bishop of Nicomedia, or the bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine, both of whom, too, had long been dead. And it is pleasant to see how, after all the jars and quarrels of their mortal life, they were now in harmony. The prevalence of this delightful feeling is still further evident by the presence of Marcellus and Photinus; Marcion, also, and Paul (most probably of Samosata), as they all seem to have been addressed pretty much together; Paul, however, having the precedence on account of the dignity of his see. And, as they had authorised the legates to sign a condemnation of all the heresies they had unhappily taught whilst they were in the flesh, they gave the strongest possible proof of their unsoundness.

If it be said that I am assuming too much, and that the bearers of these names, instead of being apparitions, may have been living prelates, my reply is, Why, then, were their sees not given? In a formal document of this kind, the name of the see was always attached to the name of the prelate. Its absence was, even in those days, a mark of spuriousness among the intelligent. I have no doubt that the composer of this letter put down every name he could recollect, heretic or orthodox; but, had he put the see, his detection would have been imminent.

In this letter, Liberius styles himself bishop of Italy. Valois thinks Italy an interpolation, as it is omitted in Epiphanius Scholasticus. I cannot decide the point; but, in either case, it confirms the suspicion of a forgery. Liberius, in a genuine document, would neither have been designated "bishop of Italy," nor "bishop" without a see.

It states that the legates had declared that not only they themselves, but also all the prelates who commissioned them, had always held the Nicene faith as well as that they would always hold it; and, what is equally curious, it would seem that the Westerns believed them. The letter is written, too, on the assumption that Liberius himself had never fallen.

It is needless to say a word more on such a composition, issuing from a council professing to be composed of bishops from all the Western provinces, and of which no record but this is preserved, although it published its proceedings to all bishops everywhere. In fact, the whole story must be a fable; for Liberius died a year before the legates could have got to Rome.

It was not till after the battle of Nacolæ, according to the historians who have recorded this legation, that Valens began these persecutions. This was fought on May 27. A. D. 366. Four months afterwards Liberius died. It is impossible that the persecutions and the synods all over Asia Minor, and the legation to Rome, and Liberius's death after it, could all have been compassed in that period.

But, it may be said, Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, recognises this legation in two or three of his letters.

To this I reply, No. On the contrary, that which is found in those letters negatives this embassy altogether. They state, it is true, that Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste, one of these legates, went to Rome, and there signed a creed. But this journey is treated as a private act of Eustathius, and in no respect as an embassy. So clearly is this the case, that, although one of his co-legates, Theophilus, bishop of Castabala, is mixed up in the transactions mentioned in these letters, no allusion is made to any legation, or visit of Theophilus to Rome. The writer of these letters could not have heard of this legation; and if Basil be supposed to have written them, it will be most clear evidence that no such legation ever had existed; as I doubt not, that, if there was such a council as Tyanaë, Basil was present at it; or, if not, that his bishop was there; from whom he would have heard an account of the synodal proceedings. That legation and these letters cannot stand together.

Before, however, we look at them, the reader should be informed that Basil, their supposed writer, was bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, and primate of that province. He is imagined in them to be on terms of intimacy with this Eustathius the legate, whose see was between one and two hundred miles distant from Cæsarea. It is difficult to understand the very incredible story of Basil and Eustathius. It is full of absurdities.

As respects, however, the present inquiry, Basil is represented as having been deluded by Eustathius ; who, while pretending to be orthodox, was in reality a time-server, subscribing one creed to-day and another to-morrow. It is represented that at length Basil's own character began to suffer. His neighbours thought his own tenets could not be very sound and stable if he could have such a friend. It is further said, that, about this time, it had become important to Eustathius's interests (he wished to obtain favour with the Arians), that he should quarrel with Basil. Accordingly, he began to write letters against him, insinuating heresy of various kinds, but principally an inclination to the doctrines of Apollinaris. Basil bears this quietly for some time. At last he is compelled to speak out, and then we find him describing his friend's doctrinal tergiversations with most startling accuracy ; still saying nothing amiss of his practices to what he might have said. It appears in the " Histories," that Eustathius had been deposed at Constantinople because his own father had excommunicated him. He had been again excommunicated at Neo-Cæsarea, in Pontus. He had been deposed by Eusebius, bishop of Constantinople, for embezzlement. Afterwards he had been deposed at Gangra for disorderly or heretical proceedings. He had been convicted at Antioch of perjury, and had been guilty of some attempts to subvert the decrees of the Council of Melitene* ; but of none

* Sozom. Hist. Eccl. iv. 424.

of these unpleasant facts does his intimate friend Basil take any notice, although they were all synodal and notorious. He confines himself to his theological variations.

At the same time, as other persons must have known of them, it is no wonder that Basil's friends began to turn their backs upon a man with such a friend. It can surprise no one that there was a large party at Cæsarea opposed to his election to that see. But is it at all likely that the real Basil could have had such a friend?

But to return to our Basil, who is a different sort of person. In describing the career of Eustathius, among the things mentioned are his journey to Rome, and signature to a creed. Three of the letters contain intelligence of this visit, and must be noticed here.

One is to the Evesenæ.* Who they were, or where they lived, is unknown. But they were a Church very dear to Basil. As they were a Church, it is singular that he addresses neither their bishop nor clergy; and this, coupled with the fact of no locality being capable of being assigned to them, gives the letter a very suspicious air. Its contents are decisive. If it was written by Basil at all, it was written in the height of the Arian persecution, which was ravaging the whole of the East, from the Hellespont to the extremities of Egypt. At this time, the bishops of Antioch and Alexandria were in exile, and scarcely a Church was in safety.

* Epist. 251.

It is, impossible, therefore, that he could have used the following language:—"Stand in the faith: look around the world, and see how small is the portion tainted with heresy. The whole remaining portion of the Church, from one extremity to the other, is receiving the gospel, and is enjoying its healthful and uncorrupted teaching."

There are other grounds for the rejection of this letter; but as this is a very plain and conclusive one, they need not be gone into. It will satisfy the reader also, in the beginning, that there are forgeries among Basil's letters. But if one is, others must follow; the style is the same. And although many of them are beautiful to read, yet if their contents be weighed, they will be found most incredible.

The next letter* to be noticed is one directed to an old and intimate friend of Basil, named Patrophilus; not heard of, however, till this, the last year but one, of Basil's life. He was bishop of *Ægea* in Cilicia; a see, too, not heard of till the next century, the true date, probably, of this letter. He was also an intimate friend of Eustathius, and therefore intimate with both the parties. The letter is supposed to be written about three years after their rupture. In such case it might have been imagined that he would have been employing his good offices in the intervening period, in endeavours to improve Eustathius, and restore the old feeling of friendship between Eustathius and Basil.

* Epist. 244.

No such thing. He had been silent all these *three years*, shocked that Basil should quarrel with Eustathius, whom he had served from a boy*, not being aware of any thing that could justify it. Basil, however, assures him, that he has not taken his letter ill; that, in fact, it only caused a smile, while he wondered how, for such a trifling cause, considering the firm friendship which had existed between himself and Patrophilus, he could have written him such a letter. This seems a very curious statement; but he says he will tell Patrophilus the cause of the quarrel.

Eustathius's doctrinal tenets, he says, had been doubted, and he (Basil) had been blamed for continuing his intimacy with him. He had been urged to procure a profession of his faith, which, after two days battling, he had done. He had then appointed a place [he does not say where] for a further meeting and confirmation in the presence of his neighbours [it must, therefore, have been near Sebaste], and to remove doubts from all minds. Eustathius, however, on the day of meeting, was not to be found. Messages were sent, but his people would not allow him to come. They complained that Basil had made him sign a new creed.

By one of those accidents which often occur in imaginative writings, who should be with Eustathius at this time but his co-legate to Rome, Theophilus, bishop of Castabala. Why or where-

* Basil's boyhood, then, from what is to be found in other letters, lasted till he was about thirty years of age.

fore is not explained ; but Basil is made to say, that while Eustathius, in answer to a request to come to the place of meeting, sent only a perfunctory letter, making no mention of the subject which brought Basil all the way from Cæsarea to within a mile or two of Sebaste, which is an incredible statement, Theophilus sent some one belonging to him to revile and abuse Basil by word of mouth, not condescending to abuse him by letter, because he would have had to style him "bishop." Therefore, says Basil, "I had to go away disgraced, broken in spirit, not having what to say to those that spoke to me ;" and he calls this Theophilus, who had thus treated him, "his brother Theophilus, worthy of all reverence and honour." Can any thing be more unlike either to truth or to Basil's character, if truly drawn by his friend, Gregory of Nazianzum ?

Then, says Basil, "not long after was the journey into Cilicia, the return, and the letter declining our communion." It seems therefore, on Basil's own showing, that this friend of his who had been three years knowing nothing, must, in Basil's estimation, have known a great deal. He must have known of this doubtless important journey into Cilicia, in which province he lived, and of the return, and of the letter rejecting Basil's communion. But if he had known all this, it is nonsense to say that Patrophilus had been three years silent and distressed at Basil's quarrel with Eustathius, not knowing what could have occasioned such unkindness on Basil's part as to relinquish the friend-

ship of Eustathius. He must have known that Eustathius had first declined Basil's communion. Besides, it so happened that this Theophilus, who had so insulted Basil, was a close neighbour of Basil's friend, Patrophilus. The absurdity, therefore, increases; and we naturally become more incredulous that one intimate with Basil and Eustathius, and a neighbour of Theophilus, almost a principal in the quarrel, and knowing of some journey into Cilicia, his own province, and the return, and the excommunication, should still, for three years, have known nothing about the reason of Basil's rupture with Eustathius. What was the cause of it? Was it any thing kept secret? No. Eustathius charged Basil with being in communion with Apollinaris, and, with him, confounding the Persons of the Trinity. He had sent letters far and wide, even to remotest places, containing these charges. He had not only done this, but he had published a letter to one Daziza, which was distributed, in a few days, all over Pontus, Galatia, and Bithynia, even to the Hellespont, charging Basil with fraud and perfidy, with corrupting the Churches, and destroying souls. Nay, Basil himself says, "which letter you must know, as I have no doubt he would send it to you. If he has not, I will." And yet Patrophilus is described as writing to Basil, that, for the last three years, he had been quite shocked at Basil's alienation from Eustathius, not being able to account for it. And Basil treats this as a truth, while he all the while assumes that Patrophilus knows all the facts that

could be told; and they clearly proved that Basil was the injured party, and that it was his communion that had been rejected by Eustathius. Such an absurd letter can never be the production of the learned and accomplished bishop of Cæsarea, and any statements it may contain are worthless as authority.

Basil is then made to express his wonder that Eustathius should have made such a stir about the creed which he had induced him to sign. His confession of faith, which he had brought from Rome, and offered with his own hand to the Council of Tyanaë, was in existence, and he [Basil] had it by him.

Any thing that the genuine Basil had said about a genuine Council of Tyanaë would come to us invested with the highest authority. Let us see what this writer says. "He, Eustathius, has forgotten the address which he made standing in the midst of the council; how he deplored the fraud by which he had been induced to sign the Eudoxian Creed; and how, on account of this fault, he had conceived the design of going to Rome to receive thence the faith of the fathers, that, by the introduction of a purer creed, he might make some compensation for the injury which he had inflicted on the Churches by his subscription to heresy."

It will be needless to remind the reader how opposed this story is to the statement of the historians.

Eustathius must have been singularly unfortunate. Here was the same scene over again as was

acted at the Roman Council. To whom was this penitent and pathetic address made, and this declaration of his self-denying pilgrimage to compensate for his past iniquity? Was there one prelate present, and who had been a bishop eight years, who had not signed this same Eudoxian Creed? Then observe the object of this very long journey, as Basil calls it, to receive from thence the faith of the fathers, as if the faith, instead of being in the heart of the believer, was something kept in a box in the custody of the Roman bishop; which had the property of the wooden cross, never to suffer diminution how much soever of it was taken away; and this, too, said of an Oriental, whose boast it was that the faith came from the East.

But Basil is generous. He is not content with giving us one account of this famed journey to Rome. He shows how much pains were taken to inculcate the idea in those days by giving us a second and a different one. In a letter* professing to be written by him to the Western bishops, and after the one to Patrophilus, he thus expresses himself respecting Eustathius: —

“Having been ejected from his bishopric on account of his having been previously deposed at Melitene, he invented a journey to you as a means of his restoration. What it was which was proposed to him by the most blessed bishop, Liberius, and what it was to which he subscribed, I know not, except that he brought a letter of restoration

* Epist. 263.

to his see; and, having shown it to the council at Tyanæ, he took his place. He now attacks the faith on the ground of which he had been received, and is the companion of those who anathematise the word "homousios;" and is a leader of those who deny the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. Since then, through you, his power of injuring the Churches has arisen, and the power which you gave him he now uses to the destruction of many, it behoves that the correction, also, should come from you, and that you should write to the Churches, and say what was the creed he signed, and how, through his change, he cancels the grace conferred upon him by the fathers of that day."

This letter, it will be seen, contradicts the one previously quoted from, as much as that letter had contradicted the historians. In the former letter he had gone to Rome in a fit of penitence for having signed an heretical creed, and in order to bring back the Nicene; of which, it must be presumed, the East contained no copy or remembrance. In this letter, he goes to obtain a reversal of his deposition. It contains, also, another direct contradiction on a vital point. In the former letter, Basil says he has by him the creed which Eustathius presented at Tyanæ, and had signed. In this he says he does not know what he had signed, and begs of the Western bishops to inform him. It destroys also itself. Let the reader just imagine the letter of a foreign bishop—a Catholic bishop—disposing of the sees in the dominions of Valens, the Arian emperor. It would have been an in-

credible transaction in Gaul or Africa: in the East, in the dominions of Valens, it is too absurd even for a smile.

I need not have noticed these letters at all, as far as the application to the West was concerned. Eustathius could not have been at Rome prior to this legation, as he was evidently, by the story, unknown to Liberius. And it may be observed, by the way, that, if we believe in the constant reference to Rome, which the writings regarded by me as spurious are always more or less insisting upon, Eustathius was a strange person to have been chosen by the fathers at Lampsacus to be the head of a legation to Rome in their names. He may have been unknown there in person, but surely not by report. His name had often been heard of, and registered in their books, in connection with such crimes as heresy, embezzlement, perjury, and excommunications; and a surer means to prevent respectable prelates from paying any attention to their request could hardly have been adopted, than sending such a legate. But serious argument is thrown away upon such a story.

Unfortunately, however, for the truth both of the letters and the legation, Liberius, even if he had lived till A.D. 366, would have been in his grave before this legation had arrived; and the great Western Council, of which this story is the only record, would also have been dissolved. But are we quite sure that Liberius was bishop of Rome, A.D. 366? It may have been that Felix was sitting on the chair of Peter, and such a story

as this adds strength to the conjecture. We find it implied, if not expressed, in the spurious letters attributed to Liberius, that he was acting as bishop of Rome even in his exile. We find Liberius restored immediately after the rescript to Felix from Constantius; and, hearing nothing of him in the interim, we marvellously find him heading a very large synod while on the brink of the grave. Such fables as these add greatly to the suspicion that the whole is a fable, and that, in truth and reality, Felix was bishop of Rome, and died bishop of Rome, A.D. 366.

My principal reason for noticing these letters was a desire to show the reader something of their spurious character, before I undertake a more extensive examination of them in reference to a similar application to Rome and the Western prelates, alleged to have been made by Basil and the Oriental prelates.

If the reader agrees with me that these cannot be genuine, he will immediately see the object of their fabrication.

Basil is made to take up his pen, and describe an Oriental prelate distressed at having abjured his former creed, and signed an heretical one. He describes him as looking about him in the East unable to find his old creed. He knows the words by heart; but that will not do. He can find it written down in every city; but no — the paper has not the Roman watermark. Rome is a very long way off certainly; some fifteen hundred miles or so; and he will probably have to go on foot.

But he must go, and obtain it from thence. It will be purer, although couched in the very words which he has at his tongue's end; and he is bound to bring back into the East, as a compensation for his lapse, the purest article he can meet with. So he goes, obtains it, and brings it back with him; as if the creed was not already there with many prelates professing it, and as if the fault was in the copy of the Oriental creed, and not in the previous depravity of the subscriber.

Can any nonsense be greater? Does the reader wish for a higher flight? Basil is very obliging; he will try his powers again.

He will cross out all that has been written, and will send the same Oriental bishop to Rome on a different errand. He will imagine him to have been deposed in the East, and, dissatisfied with his sentence, to have gone to Rome to tell his tale of wrongs. The Roman bishop receives him into his communion; and, without any new trial, or even any reference to his judges, gives him a letter which supersedes the Oriental decision. He returns with it, shows it to a synod, and, as a matter of course, is restored. Valens and the Oriental prelates are exhibited as even more submissive than Cyprian's infant Spanish Church with its one deacon. Surely this will satisfy the reader. Even Basil's invention can do no more.

No. IX. AUXENTIUS, BISHOP OF MILAN.

THE position of Auxentius at Milan (A.D. 355—374) seems, in after times, to have given great offence to the Roman party. That the bishop of Rome should have allowed the second great see of Italy to be occupied by an Arian, was such a mark of weakness, and so irreconcilable with his supreme control and active superintendence over the Universal Church, as to be altogether unintelligible. And yet, if the current history is true, he must have done this, or something very like it.

Two ways of meeting this difficulty seem to have been invented. One, which is, in fact, rather a vindication of the Church than of the bishop of Rome, is contained in a document to be found in that nest of forgeries, the minor works of Hilary, and styled a “Book against Auxentius.” And, although Jerome says, or is made to say, that Hilary wrote such a work, and although its style is very different from many of the others, still I have no doubt that it is spurious. It is said by the Benedictine editor to have been written A.D. 364. Hilary, like Eusebius of Vercelli, is represented as having no narrow-minded taste for home. We find both as lights, burning lights, irradiating every diocese but their own. Among the first acts of Valentinian’s sovereignty (according to this letter) must have been an injunction against disturbing Auxentius. When Hilary, who was in

Italy, heard of this, he was highly indignant, and told the emperor that the man was a blaspheming Arian, and had a very different creed from what the emperor, or any one else, suspected. Valentinian, startled at this intelligence, ordered a quæstor and a magister (that is all Hilary says of them) to summon Hilary and Auxentius before them (Eusebius is present also), and question them as to the truth of what Hilary had said. This took place in the presence of about (fere) ten bishops; and a very singular looking ecclesiastical court it must have been, at which to try the metropolitan of north Italy for heresy. The result was, that Auxentius declared himself a Catholic, presented a creed which satisfied the quæstor and magister, but which was, Hilary says, an ambiguous creed, Catholic or Arian, according to the punctuation. Hilary, dissatisfied with the inquiry, is represented as attempting to create more disturbance; on which he receives an order to leave Milan. This is one mode of explaining the difficulty; Valentinian is deluded by an ambiguous creed, and Auxentius is not allowed to be displaced. As this story does not affect the Roman bishop directly or materially, I shall not further inquire into it. Perhaps, if we knew positively who he was, there were doctrinal and personal reasons why he left the vindication of the Nicene faith to the bishop of Poitiers. Another and a much bolder method of relieving the Roman prelate was to assert that he actually convened a synod and deposed Auxentius. We will now examine the documents which allude to this story.

Among the writings of Athanasius is a letter from him and ninety Egyptian and Libyan bishops to the bishops in Africa. If genuine, it would, I believe, be the very first instance of any intercourse taking place between the Egyptian and African dioceses. The editor of Athanasius dates it, A.D. 369. It is, I imagine, a fancy date, with no facts to support it.

Being the first Roman letter, it was perhaps the first step towards a correspondence; and this may account for its having no special direction. It is a general circular, addressed "to the most honoured bishops of Africa." Athanasius, probably, was acquainted with none of their names, for the Sardican generation had passed away. One omission is, however, singular; he forgot to state whether it was with the Catholic or the Donatist bishops that he wished to be in correspondence. The probable consequence would be, that, when the letter reached Africa, both parties would claim it; that is, if they could decipher it, which is perhaps doubtful, as it is written in Greek.

But let us turn our attention to its contents. What induced Athanasius to write? It will be found that it was nothing affecting himself, or the ninety bishops assembled in council with him. Neither had the letter any thing to do with the African Church in particular. It was no more than a warning voice. But it makes some extraordinary statements, and such as are not to be found elsewhere.

And first, the council state "that the decree of

their beloved fellow minister Damasus, bishop of great Rome, and of the bishops who were assembled with him, and not less the decrees of the other synods in Gaul and Italy, concerning the salutary faith which Christ has given to us, and Apostles preached, and the Nicene Fathers assembled from the whole world have delivered to us, are quite sufficient; so great was *their* anxiety on account of the Arian heresy, that those who had fallen into it should be drawn back, and that its authors should be made manifest. To this [the Nicene Council] the whole world has already assented; and at this time, in the many councils which have been held, all have approved of it; those in Dalmatia, Dardania, Macedonia, the Epiri, Greece, Crete and the other islands, Sicily and Cyprus, Isauria, Pamphylia, Lycia, and the whole of Egypt and Libya, and also the most part of the Arabians. And *they* have honoured the subscribers, because, although something, a bitter offshoot of Arianism, had been left, Auxentius, namely, Ursacius and Valens [but who they are, the Africans are not informed; they are supposed to know]; still by these decrees they had been cut off and cast away. Sufficient therefore, amply sufficient, are the Nicene decrees for the overthrow of all heresy, and for the support and maintenance of evangelical teaching. But [now comes the object of this letter] since we have heard that certain persons (*τινές*), wishing to oppose it, are in the habit of quoting a certain (*τινὰ*) synod of Rimini, and wish to exalt it above the Nicene, we [Athanasius and the ninety Egyptian bishops] have

thought it good to write and exhort you [the Africans] not to endure such people; they are nothing else than another school of the Arian heresy."

I must pause here, and ask the reader to call to mind for a moment what was the state of the East and West from A.D. 366—373, between which dates this letter must have been written. In the West, where Africa was situate, Arianism was crushed; and, moreover, there is no genuine evidence that Arianism had ever made any progress in Africa. If Athanasius had been the universal bishop, which Basil would make him, his nuncio at Carthage must have reported to him that the Africans were too busy in repressing their own indigenous fancies, without troubling themselves about the inventions or heresies of foreign Churches; while in the East, from the Hellespont to the borders of Egypt, the Nicene faith was so far from being satisfactorily established, by the holding of this profusion of synods which this letter imagines, that it was trampled under foot in every portion of it, and Arianism was triumphant. In such a state of the world, I ask the reader, is it likely that Athanasius would have written to the African Church to warn them against certain persons who were quoting a certain synod of Rimini against the Nicene — as if these persons were but few in number; as if the Council of Rimini was not as well, if not better, known than the Nicene; as if the Arians were infecting Africa; as if Africa was the weak point of Christendom? If Athanasius had seen fit to write encouraging and instructing

letters to his fellow-Christians, he would have sent them in other directions. There were parts where they would have been more useful, or at least more intelligible; but we see no such documents.

Athanasius then tells the Africans that the Nicene Creed has filled the whole world. Any attempt to impugn it is vain. The Nicene Creed is eternal. Although ten synods have been held since it was convened, the Nicene bishops, compared in point of number with the heretical synods, are as the whole to its parts; which looks as if he meant to say they equalled in number the prelates assembled in all the ten councils. To say nothing of this absurd comparison of numbers, I ask, could Athanasius, with his eyes open to what was passing around him, and knowing that he was indebted for his own tenure of his see to no love for the Nicene Creed, but to worldly and political reasons actuating a cruel Arian emperor, have used such language? After having entered into some theological statements, he concludes with telling them, that he would have written more, only he knew it would be useless, as the Africans were acquainted with the controversy; not an uncommon excuse in spurious documents. The point, however, of the letter is the postscript. Athanasius and his ninety Egyptian and Libyan bishops proceed to inform the prelates of Africa of their having written to Damasus, expressing their wonder that Auxentius had not been deposed and excommunicated, and thanking him for having ejected Valens and Ursacius, and all who were of

their opinion. The object of this letter is now plain enough. It was to induce a belief of the power of the Roman prelate to interfere in the North of Italy, and to judge and depose its metropolitan, Auxentius, as well as to depose the Panonian prelates, Valens and Ursacius. It is another version of what has been already seen in the Sardinian documents. Ursacius and Valens were there summoned to Rome by Julius.*

That Athanasius, however, was not the author of this letter, may be seen by the statement, that *usia* and *hypostasis* mean the same thing; that the latter has no other signification than existence; and that one hundred and thirty years had elapsed since the controversy between the two Dionysiuses. This, by the Roman computation, throws his letter sixteen years later than the death of Athanasius; and, by the computation of Jerome, it would be twenty-two years. The letter, also, falls along with the other Athanasian documents, of which it forms a part.

But there is another letter of Athanasius, supposed by his editor, Montfaucon, to have been written by him, two years later, to Epictetus, bishop of Corinth; in which it is said, in almost the very words of the former letter, that at that time various synods had been celebrated in Gaul, Spain, and great Rome; and that the assembled prelates had anathematized those who were yet secretly holding Arian opinions,—such as Auxentius, bishop

* See before, p. 322. &c.

of Milan, Ursacius, and Valens, and Gaius, from Pannonia; and that they had sent letters everywhere, saying that no other synod than the Nicene was to be quoted in the Catholic Church. Instead of being the last paragraph, this is the first in this letter, and in style has much more resemblance to the letter to the Africans than to the letter in which it is found. It has probably been prefixed to it.

We have now been told of innumerable orthodox synods, of which no other account is known. Some in the East, which are not only incredible, but would have been impossible under persecuting Arian emperors; others in the West, in Gaul and Spain, whose acts, and, indeed, even the names of the places where they were held, have most suspiciously perished. But there is one council, of which the place where it was held is known, and also the name of the prelate who held it; moreover, its synodal letter is preserved. It is the Roman council, about which, as we have seen, Athanasius has been writing. In A.D. 369, he had written to request that Auxentius might be deposed. In A.D. 371, he writes to say he has been anathematized. In A.D. 369, he says to the African bishops, that Valens and Ursacius, Pannonian bishops, had been excommunicated at Rome in a council; and that he had thanked Damasus for that deed. In A.D. 371, Athanasius would lead us to suppose these unfortunate men had been tried again, not only at Rome, but in Gaul and Spain, and again been anathematized (talk of persecution, indeed — here is positive cruelty); having for

companions Auxentius and one Gaius, also from Pannonia.

Let us now inquire about the acts of these Roman councils. The proceedings of one only of the councils seem to have been preserved. It is found in the histories of Sozomen* and Theodoret†, and is directed to the bishops of Illyria. Holstein discovered in the Vatican library a Latin copy, which is thought by some to be the original. It, however, is directed to the Oriental bishops. But, whether the original be in Latin or Greek, it is one of those documents which are surrounded with every suspicion. It stands in the histories with nothing whatever to explain or illustrate it, except what is in itself. The council professes to have been held, as it must of course have been, by the emperor's rescript. Damasus could not, of his own authority, have summoned prelates who did not belong to his province; they must have attended by the emperor's order. Neither could he have inquired into the delinquencies of a bishop out of his province without the emperor's permission. Valentinian, therefore (as it professes that it was held to try Auxentius), must have given his assent to that trial.

The next thing to be observed is, that the letter is, like Athanasius's letter to the Africans, directed to no one in particular, but "to the bishops in Illyria," or "throughout the East;" the Greek copy being directed to the Illyrians, who spoke

* Hist. Eccl. vi. 23.

† Hist. Eccl. ii. 22.

Latin, and the Latin copy to the Orientals, who spoke Greek. It has no date attached to it, being prudently indistinct to suit any period. It gives, consequently, no clue to the year of the synod. Now with regard to its contents. It professes that the council was summoned by imperial rescript, to try Auxentius, but it never says they did try him. It only states that the council had learnt, by means of some of their Gaulish and Venetian brethren, that Auxentius had been (somehow or somewhere) else condemned. It destroys the magical number of three hundred and eighteen bishops at the council of Nice, by adding the Roman legates; and, finally, it informs the bishops whom it is addressing, that, though the Rimini council was more numerous, its creed had not superseded that of Nicæa, because it had not received the assent of the Roman bishop, and of Vincent of Capua, whose career in the Church had been blameless. The bishop of Rome at that time was either Liberius or Felix, either of whom had doubtless signed it; and as to Vincent and his spotless career, I leave the two infallibles, Liberius and Damasus, to settle that matter between them. So much for the synodal document of this council, which does not even profess to have condemned Auxentius, although it had been summoned by the imperial rescript for that particular purpose.

Let us now consider whether it is at all likely that such a council ever could have been held. We know from a pagan contemporary, that Valentinian “stood midway between the different re-

ligions, and disturbed no one. He never commanded that this or that creed should be preferred. He never sought with threats to induce any of his subjects to prefer his own, but left everything untouched as he found it.”*

We also know that about the earliest time when this synod is supposed to have been held (it ranges, according to the schemes of different writers, between A.D. 369—372), he married an Arian; and, moreover, we know that Auxentius continued to be bishop of Milan to the day of his death, A.D. 374. In other words, this council is a fable.

I submit that facts like these are conclusive against any Roman synod having been convened by the emperor's rescript, to try Auxentius for heresy; and, without that rescript, no synod could have been held; I submit, also, that the synodal letter is manifestly spurious, and that the Athanasian documents relating to it were invented only to induce a belief that a Milanese primate and Pannonian bishops had been tried and deposed by a Roman prelate.

In connexion with this subject, must be noticed an extraordinary document†, purporting to be a letter from Valentinian to the bishops of the Asian diocese; because it alludes to these synods in Rome and Gaul.

It recites that a very large synod had been held in Illyria; and that, after a great discussion, the fathers had professed the homousian faith; and,

* Amm. Marc. xxx. c. 9.

† Theod. Hist. Eccl. iv. 8.

what is exceedingly singular, had declined to be relieved from the discharge of the secular offices on the authority of the text, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The emperor then addresses the Asiatic prelates, "What say you, O bishops and teachers of the word of salvation. If this be your profession, then, from love to each other, cease to abuse the authority of the emperor, and do not persecute the faithful servants of God, through whose prayers wars cease on earth, and the apostate angels are kept away. They labour in prayer to ward off the destructive demons; they pay the legal taxes; they oppose not the power of the emperor, but without guile obey God and our laws. You, however, have shown yourselves disobedient: we use the alpha to the ω . You have sold yourselves. We, wishing to be innocent of your blood, like Pilate who, after his examination of Christ, and not wishing, when asked, to kill him, turned towards the east, and, washing his hands, said, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just man.' We, I say, have always forbidden you to persecute, to oppress, to envy the workers of the vineyard of Christ; or to expel the servants of the great King," &c. Then follow some still more obscure expressions; after which, he says he had given this order in the presence of Amegatius, Ceraunius, Damasus, and Dailampon, and Bretesius. And, to our astonishment, we find that this man, who was indifferent about creeds, added the creed

that had been agreed to in Illyria, and which speaks of the synods of Rome and Gaul.

It is needless to point out the spurious character of such an insane composition, issuing, too, from the emperor Valentinian, and especially to prelates in his brother's dominions, who were acting under his brother's orders.

NO. X. RESCRIPT OF GRATIAN AND VALENTINIAN II., A.D. 378.

I TAKE this opportunity of noticing a rescript, alleged to have been sent by the emperor Gratian and Valentinian II., to an Italian council.

The jesuit Sirmond found it in the royal library of France; and it is now published in an appendix to the Theodosian code. There is along with it a synodal letter from this Italian council to the emperors. These two documents are found in the above-mentioned Appendix, pages XVII.—XX.

First, I will notice the synodal letter.

Who the parties addressing the emperor might be, can only be conjectured. They seem to have been an Italian Council; but there are no names. The place of meeting is the "sublime Sedis Apostolicæ Sacrarium," and there is no date.

The contents of this document are such as might be expected from such peculiarities. Not only bishops of the province of Rome, but bishops also of

the province of Milan, are supposed to be the writers, which make their language and their request still more peculiar and curious. They tell the young emperors that, "filled with the Holy Spirit, and following the commands of the apostles, they (the young emperors), in order to restore the Church which Ursinus had divided, had decreed that, on his punishment, and the separation of his followers from him, the Roman bishop should take cognizance of the remaining bishops of the Churches [the whole extent of what that means is conjectural; but, as we shall see, it relates at least to the provinces of Milan and Africa]; that the high priest of religion, with his companions, should judge on religion, and that no injury should be inflicted on the *sacerdotium*, which often happens if a *sacerdos* be subjected to the judgment of the secular powers. It is a decree, they say, worthy of religious emperors; it pays great respect to the Church, and is exempt from error. How often do the secular powers acquit those whom the bishops have condemned, and how often do they condemn those whom the bishops have acquitted.

It may be observed here that the compilers of the Theodosian Code had not met with this letter. They have omitted this important law. But they have inserted, singularly enough, another law published by Gratian, A.D. 376*, which reads very

* Imppp. Valens, Gratianus et Valentinianus AAA. Artemio Euridico Appio Gerasimo et ceteris Episcopis. Qui mos est causarum civilium idem in negotiis ecclesiasticis obtinendus est: ut si qua sunt ex quibusdam dissensionibus levibusque delictis ad

differently, and to the following effect :—“ Let the same custom which prevails in civil causes prevail also in ecclesiastical. If any complaint arises from dissensions or light faults relating to ecclesiastical discipline, let it be inquired into in the neighbourhood, and by the diocesan synods. Excepting, however, all matters of a criminal nature, which are reserved to the secular authorities.”

It will be seen that there is no mention of the bishop of Rome, nor of any “ Pontifex Religionis ;” and that the matters which were permitted to the diocesan synods, were merely smaller offences against discipline and order.

But to proceed. The bishops then inform the emperors that they had some time before deposed the bishop of Parma, and also the bishop of Putcoli, but that they had resisted the sentence. An African bishop, too, one Restitutus (whose name appears among the Hilarian Fragments), whom the emperors had ordered to appear and stand a trial, had disregarded the order. Claudian, a Donatist bishop in Rome, whom the emperors had ordered to be expelled, still remained there ; all these had set at nought the Roman bishops’ sentence ; and, as it appears, the imperial one also : nay, the faction of Ursinus had suborned a Jew, one Isaac, to bring a charge of a capital crime

religionis observantiam pertinentia locis suis et a suæ diœceseos synodis audiantur ; excepots quæ actio criminalis ab ordinariis extraordinariisque iudicibus aut illustribus potestatibus audienda constituit. Dat. xvi. Kal. Jun. Treviris Valente V. et Valentiniano AA. coss.

against Damasus ; and, had not these machinations been thwarted by the emperors, the Church had well nigh been despoiled *omnibus ministeriis*, since, when he who had been made judge over all, was defending himself, there was no one to try the guilty or the factious invaders of the episcopacy.

This language from clergy of the diocese of Milan is singular ; but their request to the emperors is still more so. It will be best learnt from the imperial reply, the part of it more immediately relating to this inquiry, and directed to one Aquilinus, a vicar. After enumerating all the cases of a defiance of judicial sentence mentioned by the bishops in their letter, and soundly rating the authorities for permitting them, the emperors declare their will, that if any one shall be condemned by the sentence of Damasus, passed with the advice of five *or seven* bishops, or Catholics, and shall unjustly seek to retain his Church, or if any one summoned to undergo a trial before the bishops, shall contumaciously keep away, he shall be conveyed to Rome to undergo the trial before the episcopal judges, either by the prætorian prefects of Gaul and Italy, or by proconsuls, or by vicars ; or if such ferocity shall be exhibited in parts still more distant [*longinquioribus partibus*], the trial shall take place before the metropolitan bishop of the province ; but if the criminal be the metropolitan himself, he must of necessity immediately attend at Rome, or before those judges whom the Roman bishop shall appoint. But if the judgment of the metropolitan is for any cause suspected,

leave is given to appeal to the Roman bishop, or to a council of fifteen neighbouring bishops, provided that the cause has not been investigated. Such is the substance, if it had been genuine, of a very remarkable rescript; indeed, quite as startling as Victor's or Stephen's excommunications: and it partakes of one of their peculiarities. Although an exceedingly practical document, it is not in the Theodosian code; nor is there any record that any one had ever seen it, or used it. A few words will suffice to show its character. To whom is it directed? to one Aquilinus, a vicar. Vicar of what country? It has no date. No consul's name appears. Neither does it say where the emperors were residing at the time. It is a law, too, affecting the duties of the highest officers of the state,—the prætorian prefects of Gaul and Italy; the proconsuls—but of what country is not stated; and vicars—but what vicars we are not told: and yet it is directed to one Aquilinus, a vicar. They will have to learn their duties from one Aquilinus, a vicar, should they ever hear of the rescript.

Such a document is a manifest forgery. Then observe its contents. It is clearly intended to relate to the Oriental empire. It speaks of proconsuls, but I believe that there was but one in the West, and that was in Africa. And after enumerating the prefectures, it speaks of more distant provinces. Had these been within the Western limits the guilty parties had to be forwarded to Rome, but being without, the metropolitan is to

examine into these offences, except the metropolitan is the guilty party himself, or except his judgment was suspected; in the former case he was to go to Rome and stand his trial there; in the latter the appeal was to the Roman bishop, or to fifteen neighbouring bishops.

Consequently, it was the opinion of Sirmond, and it is the natural interpretation of the Documents, that the Council had been summoned by the emperors when they were sole masters of the Roman world, that is, between the ninth day of August, A.D. 378, the day of the death of Valens, and the nineteenth of January, A.D. 379, the day when Theodosius was assumed into the empire. Let us see, then, what we have to believe, in order to support the genuineness of these documents. Where was Gratian at the beginning of these five months? The battle of Adrianople was fought on the ninth of August, A.D. 378. At that time Gratian was in Dacia Ripensis, hurrying onward by forced marches to join his uncle. The rescript, therefore, summoning the Council must have been obtained from him after that battle; not only so, but after the Italian bishops had heard of that battle, and of his being practically sole emperor of East and West, and while he was on his way into the East. We must believe, also, that after the rescripts had been received, and the summonses served in all parts of Italy, the Council assembled. Much appears to have been done in it before it separated. We must believe, also, that after it had separated, this letter being sent after

him, had to travel perhaps as far as Constantinople, and that the rescript was obtained before the nineteenth of January, A.D. 379; and we must believe, what is almost the most incredible part of the story, that he would, in his distressing position, have thought of conferring on a Western bishop authority over Oriental bishops, and ecclesiastically subjecting the East to the West, at a time, too, when he, a youth, was resigning the Eastern empire to a most approved and consummate general. The act would not only have been an insult, which would in all likelihood have been immediately resented by the person whom he was about to make his equal, if not his master, — to say nothing of the feelings of the Oriental Churches, — but it would have been a folly also, a piece of waste paper, which, in the next moment, would have been put in the fire. Of course there is no record of this wonderful and practical law, which exempts the Church from secular jurisdiction, and confers the authority of the state on the Roman prelate. No one, as far as we know, ever heard of it, or used it.

No more need be said.

No. XI. PAULINUS AND VITALIS.

OUR next subject of enquiry is whether there were any such personages as Paulinus and Vitalis, who are said to have been bishops of Antioch in the fourth century.

There is a relation in the historians, supported by some writings which I believe to be spurious, that, A.D. 362, Lucifer, bishop of Carali, in Sardinia, consecrated Paulinus, a presbyter of Eustathius, the deposed bishop of Antioch, as bishop of that see, in the lifetime of Meletius,—that about A.D. 375, this Paulinus was recognised by the Roman and Western prelates as bishop of the Catholics of Antioch, they having always refused to acknowledge Meletius because he had been translated, or had received Arian consecration,—that about the same time a third bishop, Vitalis, appeared, who had been consecrated by Apollinaris the heretic;—that each of these three prelates claimed to be in communion with the Roman see, and urged that communion as their title to the bishopric of Antioch, while the Roman Church would only recognise Paulinus. The story then proceeds that Paulinus died, and was succeeded by one Evagrius,—that he soon after died, and that no successor to him was appointed,—that, by one means or another, the Roman prelate was persuaded to recognise Meletius's successor Flavian, and so peace was again restored to the Church of Antioch. The drift of this story was to assert the

Roman supremacy in the East. It is connected with an alleged application from Basil, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, Meletius, and the Oriental prelates, to Rome and the Western prelates, for their aid in restoring peace to the Eastern Church.

I believe the whole of this account to be a fable; and I will endeavour to prove it so as clearly as I can; and in order to do this, will first notice what the historians say about Paulinus and his consecration.

§ 1. PAULINUS.

Ruffinus gives no account of Eustathius, or his exile; but the first notice of the Church of Antioch in his history is, "At different times much confusion had existed at Antioch. On the death of Eudoxius [it was not his death, but his translation to Constantinople], when many prelates were ambitiously striving to possess the see, at length they [who?] uncanonically translate thither Meletius, from Sebaste, a city of Armenia. He is again sent by them [whom?] into exile, because he, contrary to their expectation, preached the Nicene Creed, and not the doctrine of Arius. As a large portion of the people followed him there was a separation from the communion of the heretics."*

This, I think, will appear to be an interpolation; and one made by a person ignorant of the history. Ruffinus, if he had been in the East and at Antioch within thirteen or fourteen years after this occur-

* Hist. Eccl. v. 24.

rence, could not have been ignorant of the career of Eudoxius. Indeed he had died bishop of Constantinople, only three or four years before Ruffinus's Oriental journey. The words "they" and "them" mean the Arians, but have no antecedent noun. Such is the sort of mistake which an interpolator would be likely to fall into.

Again, in the 27th chapter, we have more information.* "Lucifer, when desired by Eusebius, as both had been exiled into the districts of Upper Thebais [but who Eusebius and Lucifer are is not told us, and as one Eusebius has been described, it might naturally be supposed to be the same; but he is the long departed bishop of Nicomedia] to proceed to Alexandria, and see Athanasius, and in a synod of the prelates who survived, to pass a decree concerning the state of the Church, refused to go, but sent his deacon in his place. He himself proceeded to Antioch, hoping to unite the divided parties, by electing a bishop of whom both would approve. [There has been no account of any divided parties, except in the extract above mentioned, and that was one between the Arians and orthodox.] He [Lucifer] hastily consecrated Paulinus, a Catholic and holy man, worthy of the office, but one of whom both parties did not approve." It was hardly to be expected that they should; Arians and Orthodox had each their bishops, with whom they were satisfied, and Ruffi-

* Jerome in his "Book on Ecclesiastical Writers" states, that the place of exile of Lucifer was Palestine, and of Eusebius was first Scythopolis, and afterwards Cappadocia.

nus has given us no information yet of any other divisions.

Again, in the 30th chapter, we obtain additional information. Eusebius (whoever he was) is said to have gone to Alexandria, and to have assisted at a council in passing a decree suitable to the existing difficulties of the Church. The purport of it was that, with the exception of the leaders, leave should be given to the prelates, on abjuring their heresy and adopting the Nicene Creed, to remain in their sees. After this Eusebius is reported to have *returned* to Antioch [where he is never said to have been; he was from the Thebais], and having found what Lucifer had done, to have been very indignant, and to have gone away without communicating with either party. And now, for the first time, we learn who that other party was, “for the followers of Meletius had not joined themselves to the former Catholics, that is, those who had belonged to the bishop Eustathius, among whom was Paulinus, but had their own bishop and their own conventicle.” [Here it is alleged that there was an original body of Catholics, and that the Meletians had not belonged to them, and that Lucifer had failed in uniting the Meletians to them.] When Eusebius found he could not unite these parties he retired.

But, if all this be true, a very odd state of things must have existed. There is no concealment about it; it is openly said that, soon after these occurrences, Meletius returned from his exile, and, as he was bishop of the larger body, took possession

of the Churches and held an Oriental synod, giving every sign of his being the legitimate bishop of Antioch ; while not a word is said of his alleged rival, Paulinus. The whole Eastern Church, it is admitted, acknowledged Meletius, and behaved just as if no Paulinus was in existence. But it is added that Meletius was not united to Athanasius ; an unsupported statement, and no doubt an utter fable. Athanasius's communion was safely given to Paulinus ; it need have no visible consequences.

Lucifer is represented as vexed that his bishop was not acknowledged by Eusebius, and as unwilling to accept the Alexandrian decree, but as having at length felt himself bound by the conduct of his deacon. Hence, in some way or other, arose the Luciferian schism, which is a very mysterious and extraordinary schism, as the man from whom it took its name did not adopt its tenets.

And now we are able to judge of what Ruffinus, an able and learned man, is said to have written. He introduces *, in his account of the Council of Milan, the names of six prelates, without the names of their sees ; and it is the first time that they appear in his history. He repeats the mention of two of them a few sections later, and still without any allusion to their sees ; and in fact he never, in any part of his history, states who they were. They continue to the end as indistinct to the reader of the fifth century as James or Thomas would be to us.

* c. 20.

He mistakes the translation of Eudoxius from Antioch to Constantinople for his death, although the real Ruffinus must have known the truth. He refers to dissensions in the Church of Antioch, but the only dissentients whom he has mentioned are the Catholics and Arians, and to them he did not mean, in these remarks, to allude. He meant very different parties. He was referring to a supposed schism in the orthodox section of the Church under two leaders, Meletius and Paulinus, the former the bishop, the latter a presbyter, and head of a small party, who, on the exile of Eustathius, are imagined to have seceded. He states that Lucifer's object was to unite these two parties (who, had they been real parties, would probably have been in considerable opposition to each other) by electing a bishop of whom both would approve; and while he admits that the Meletians already had a bishop to whom they were attached, he states that the bishop whom Lucifer consecrated was the presbyter of the smaller body, as if he had expected that the larger body would reject their own approved prelate, and accept the schismatic presbyter. He closes this incredible story by speaking of Eusebius's returning to a city which he had never left, having already stated that he had come from a very opposite direction. I ask the reader whether he believes that Ruffinus, an able and learned man, could have written his history so ignorantly and absurdly; or that the facts recorded can be at all probable? And yet such is the amber in which

the fly of the story is imbedded; namely, the consecration of Paulinus to the see of Antioch.

Let us now view these proceedings as they are recorded in the Greek historians. It will have been seen that, in Ruffinus, Meletius is not considered bishop of Antioch, inasmuch as he had been translated from Sebaste in Armenia. But if that was so, neither had Eustathius been bishop of Antioch, for he had been translated from Berœa. In the Greek historians another ground is taken. He is consecrated by Arians. One says he was so thorough an Arian that he had signed the Acacian Creed at the Council of Seleucia, A.D. 359*; another, that the followers of the late bishop Eudoxius selected Meletius on account of the purity and excellence of his character, and from an idea that through him they might win to their party the sect of Eustathians, who are represented as the beau ideal of Catholicism, and over whom Paulinus was presbyter†: a most extraordinary supposition.

Theodoret has a different story‡: while one writer says that he was bishop of Sebaste, and another bishop of Berœa, Theodoret lets out a little truth. He says that he was bishop of some place in Armenia, but, owing to some dislike of his people, not residing in his diocese. He further states that the Arians thought he belonged to them (this could not be doubted if he had signed the Acacian

* Socr. Hist. Eccl. ii. 44.

† Sozom. Hist. Eccl. iv. 28.

‡ Theod. Hist. Eccl. ii. 31.

Creed at Seleucia); while the Catholics knew well that he maintained the Nicene Creed, which is impossible if he had signed the Acacian Creed at Seleucia—that the two parties entered into a compact to elect him, and that the document was consigned to the care of Eusebius, bishop of Samosata,—that the emperor gave his assent,—that all Antioch, Jews and Gentiles, went out to meet him on his approach,—that the emperor ordered him to preach a sermon from Proverbs, viii. 22.,—that he preached the Nicene Creed,—and that he was immediately sent into exile, and Euzoius consecrated in his room.

It will be seen that these tales destroy one another. My impression is, that they were invented only to justify the consecration of Paulinus and prevent its being thought schismatical, by proving Meletius's election to Antioch uncanonical. Some stain or defect must be cast upon the election of Meletius, and the diversity of statement confirms the suspicion that the historians had no facts to deal with.

But to proceed with Lucifer and Eusebius. The three historians agree that these two prelates had been exiled into the Upper Thebais; and, on the news of the revocation of their sentence, had resolved to pay immediate attention to the state of the Church of Antioch. But here, too, there is no unanimity in the statements. Two historians say that it was agreed that Lucifer should go to Antioch, while Eusebius should go to Alexandria to hold a council, and resolve in what way the

Church canons might be maintained, and not be violated with impunity. Ruffinus, as we have seen, says that Eusebius had wished Lucifer to go with him to Alexandria, but that he refused, and went straight to Antioch. Theodoret says, Eusebius wished Lucifer to go to Alexandria, and that he, Eusebius, should undertake the affairs of Antioch. But Lucifer would not go to Alexandria; nothing would please him but to go to Antioch. And there they all agree that he ordained Paulinus, and that too before Meletius had arrived; although Meletius was only at Melitene, and Lucifer had had to come from the Upper Thebais. It might have been thought that Meletius would have reached Antioch long before Lucifer. Such are the strange and conflicting accounts of the historians. And now let us look at the credibility of the story in itself, without reference to them.

Two Italian bishops, one from Sardinia and the other from Liguria (neither of whom, as far as is known, had ever been in the East), are exiled into the Upper Thebais. After some years' absence from home, they receive news of their recal. They immediately cast aside the desire of home, and the care of their own sees, and, in all probability without a penny in their purses, undertake a journey, at least a thousand miles out of their way, to reconcile a schism among the Christians of Antioch (to whom they were quite strangers, and whose language they probably could not speak) — a schism, too, of a most contemptible character; since it is part of the story that Meletius had all the

Churches of the city, and was in communion with the Oriental prelates ; while Paulinus is never heard of as interfering in any way, nor the Orientals as at all troubling themselves about him. Yet this is represented as the first thought of these two Italian bishops on recovering their freedom. It must, of course, have been the great agony of their exile. "Oh that we could escape and reach Antioch, and compose the schism in that city!" I beg the reader to judge of the story independently of the manner in which it is transmitted, and ask himself if it can be true ?

Let us now see what support it has beside the historians. There are some writings to be adduced, but I think they only confirm the notion of forgery.

The first is the Dialogue between Jerome and a disciple of this Lucifer, which has been already noticed*, and I think clearly condemned as a forgery. It alludes to Lucifer's consecration of Paulinus.

The other is the "Tomus ad Antiochenses," which assumes that ordination as a fact. This is the work which has already been noticed as tampered with.† It was then produced to show that the allusion to Sardica was an interpolation in it, after it had been seen by Ruffinus ; or rather (for I believe it had never been seen by him) inserted by somebody else into his history, and that none of the historians had seen it (whatever it was originally) as it now appears. If the "Tomus"

* See before, p. 166.

† See before, p. 329.

has been tampered with, of course no statement contained in it can be relied upon, except it can be satisfactorily supported from other testimony. It needs help, instead of being able to confer strength; and I need not further have noticed it, but it is such an extraordinary production that it deserves attention. It cannot be believed that this is now as it was first published; it is written, however, by the same pen that wrote the histories. Its date, if it were genuine, would be A.D. 362. Its address is the following:—

“To our beloved and most dear fellow-bishops Eusebius, Lucifer, Asterius, Cymatius, and Anatolius, Athanasius and the bishops who are with him in Alexandria, from Italy and Arabia, Egypt and Libya, Eusebius, Asterius, Gaius, Agathos, Ammonius, Agathodæmon, Dracontius, Adelphius, Hermæon, Mark, Theodorus, Andrew, Paphnutius, another Mark, Zoilus, Menas, George, Lucius, Macarius, and the rest, much health in Christ.”

It will be seen that Eusebius and Asterius are writing in this letter to themselves, and to Lucifer, Cymatius, and Anatolius, the former of the two latter living at Paltus in Syria, and the other styled of Eubœa: so that Eusebius and Asterius, together with Athanasius and others, write to Eusebius, Asterius, Lucifer, the Syrian Cymatius, and the Greek Anatolius, as follows:—“We [Eusebius, Asterius, &c.] are fully persuaded that you [Eusebius, Asterius, Lucifer, &c.], being good stewards and ministers of God, are able in every respect to arrange the affairs of the Church. But since it

has come to our knowledge that very many who formerly, through contention, separated from us [this is opposed to every historical statement. It is always said that Paulinus and his party withdrew from the Church to avoid contact with heresy], now wish to be at peace, and many relinquishing their Arian tenets seek our communion [it is assumed here that Egypt and the West were in communion with Paulinus, and not with Meletius], we [Eusebius, Asterius, &c.] have thought it good to write those things which our beloved Eusebius and Asterius have written, and send to you [Eusebius, Asterius, Lucifer, &c.], rejoicing at the intelligence," &c.

After a few more sentences they proceed: "We, the Egyptian bishops, together with our dear brothers Eusebius and Asterius, would, on many grounds, have wished to come that we might embrace you [Eusebius, Asterius, Lucifer, Cymatius, and Anatolius], and enjoy together this peace and concord; but as we have already, in other letters, informed you, and as you will learn from our fellow ministers, we are detained by the affairs of our Churches, on which account we grieve. But we have asked our fellow ministers, Eusebius and Asterius, to come to you [Eusebius, Asterius, Lucifer, Cymatius, and Anatolius] in our [Egyptian bishops Eusebius and Asterius] place, and we thank them [Eusebius and Asterius]; for, although they have the power of returning to their dioceses, still they, putting every thing else on one side, have preferred, on account of the urgent necessities

of the Church, to come to you [Eusebius, Asterius, Lucifer, Cymatius, and Anatolius],” and so on. This specimen is enough.

Let us now notice what concerns our present inquiry. They add, as many as desire to be in union with us, and principally those who meet in the old [there is no noun added, nor has there been a word said of any city or place to which it could apply. Moreover, what is said is a direct contradiction of the histories. They represent that Lucifer and Eusebius sought to re-unite the two parties, as if it were a matter of difficulty, and that Lucifer by his ordination of Paulinus had destroyed all hope of union; but this document represents Eusebius as saying that the Meletians were anxious to be joined to Paulinus, and would set aside Meletius for that purpose], and those flying from the Arian communion, invite to yourselves. Receive them as fathers their sons, as teachers and guardians receive them; and having joined them to Paulinus [but who he is there is no intelligence], ask no more from them than an anathema of the Arian creed, and a confession of the Nicene; and also an anathema on those who call the Holy Spirit a creature, and separated from “the substance of Christ;” which looks like downright heresy from the great champion of orthodoxy.*

After mentioning some marvellous transactions

* In the Athanasian tract, “De salutari Adventu Jesu Christi,” it is said that the word Christ includes the idea of flesh; the name is connected with suffering and death.

which had taken place in the council, it concludes : “ These things we have examined ; and what they have professed we have shortly mentioned to you ; that is, those of us who are left in Alexandria, together with Asterius and Eusebius [Eusebius and Asterius are still in Alexandria], for the most part of us have gone away to our dioceses ; ” and the letter concludes : “ Do you [Eusebius, Asterius, Lucifer, the Syrian and Greek bishops] assemble together in the same place where you *have been accustomed* and read this letter, and have the goodness to convoke all together at that place, as it is just that the letter should there be first read, and that those that wish and are desirous of peace should be reconciled ; and when they have been reconciled, that then, wherever it shall please the people and in their presence, that these assemblies shall be held, and the Lord be glorified by all unanimously. The brethren with me salute you. Farewell. Remember me before the Lord. I, Athanasius. The other bishops, also, who have met together, have subscribed. Also two deacons, Herennius and Agapetus, sent from Lucifer, bishop of Carali. Also Maximus and Calamerus, deacons from Paulinus. There were also some monks, who had been sent from bishop Apollinaris to attend the synod.

“ The aforesaid bishops, to whom the letter was sent, are these : Eusebius, bishop of the city of Vercelli, in Gaul ; Lucifer, bishop of the island of Sardinia ; Asterius of Petræ, in Arabia ; Cymatius of Palta, in Cælo-Syria ; Anatolius of Eubœa.

“ They who wrote the letter are Athanasius, Papa ; and they who were with him in Alexandria, Eusebius and Asterius and the rest, Gaius of Paratonium,” &c.

Eusebius also added in Latin a summary and confirmation of what has been said.

“ I, Asterius, approve of these statements, and wish you health in the Lord.

“ And after the synodal letter had been sent from Alexandria, thus subscribed by the before mentioned persons, afterwards these also subscribed.”

Then follows a creed of Paulinus, which is also a summary of the contents of the paper ; and this creed appears, also, in the pseudo-Epiphanius.

As a conclusion to a notice of this letter it may be added, that there is not the slightest allusion to the city to which it is sent, nor is the name of any person so defined as that it might not apply to Rome or Constantinople, as well as Antioch. The letter is directed to Eusebius, Asterius, Lucifer, Cymatius, and Anatolius ; but as these were all strangers to Antioch, and three or four of them probably had never been there, it is clear that in the ninth section the Church at Antioch is addressed. Indeed, Eusebius and Asterius join with the Egyptians in telling the parties addressed to hold their assemblies where they had been *accustomed to meet*.

It will have been noticed that this document in every way contradicts the histories. It assumes that there was a willingness in the Meletians to be

united to Paulinus, and that Paulinus had been consecrated by Lucifer before the synod was dissolved, and before Eusebius had arrived at Antioch. If in his creed Paulinus is not styled a bishop, it is not customary in such spurious documents. Asterius subscribes in the same way. Paulinus's legates are present. It agrees with the histories in nothing, except that which was the main drift of the forgery, viz. that there was such a being as Paulinus, and that he was living at Antioch, bishop of the Catholics, in communion with Egypt and the West. The document is as rank a forgery as was ever fabricated.*

There only remains one extract from Jerome's "Chronicle," recording the consecration. I will add two or three others respecting Meletius, evidently interpolations. Their tone of contempt is not in the style of a chronicler, but of a partizan; and the last of them is undoubtedly untrue.

"A.D. 331. At Antioch, after Tyrannus, Vitalis is ordained bishop XX.; after whom Philogonius XXI.; to whom succeeded Paulinus XXII.; after whom Eustathius XXIII., since whose exile the

* Valois has tried to explain how this document could have been sent from the parties to the parties; but in doing so he had to conceal that they are represented as starting from the Upper Thebais, which is the unanimous statement of the historians, and flatly to contradict their account.

† Jerome is made to say in the preface to the "Chronicle," that the portion of it from the Council of Nice to the end was entirely his own. Could he rise from his grave and read it, as we now have it, he would alter that passage.

Arians have had possession of the Church to the present day; that is to say, Eulalius, Eusebius, Euphronius, Placillus, Stephanus, Leontius, Eudoxius, Meletius, Euzoius, Dorotheus, again Meletius; of whom I have given no notices, because I consider them *enemies of Christ*, rather than bishops."

This, from its wording, is evidently an insertion after the completion of the work, and contains, perhaps, much error. Its statement as applied to Meletius points out why it was inserted.

"A.D. 364. Meletius, bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, is transferred by Acacius and George, Arian bishops, to Antioch; and, after no great while, when he had received presbyters, who had been deposed by his predecessor Eudoxius, and had justly deserved exile by a change of creed, he made it appear that he was exiled for his faith." I believe this to be the intended meaning; the statement is quite gratuitous and unsupported.

"A.D. 366. Eusebius and Lucifer return from exile; one of whom, Lucifer, with two other confessors, makes Paulinus, presbyter of the bishop Eustathius, who had never polluted himself with heretical communion, bishop of the Catholics at Antioch."

"A.D. 367. A synod was held at Antioch by Meletius and his partizans, in which, having rejected the homoousian and Anomæan creeds, they adopt the homoiousian, the Macedonian dogma."

§ 2. VITALIS.

WE will now leave Paulinus, and direct our attention to the other imaginary personage who appears before us as Apollinaris's, bishop of Antioch. It will have been seen, according to the "Tomus ad Antiochenses," that Apollinaris, styled a bishop, sent some monks to the Council of Alexandria, A.D. 362. He was the founder of a heresy respecting the incarnation of our Lord, which is said to have assumed, at different times, different forms. At first he declared that the body which our Lord took had no living soul. To this it was replied that our Lord himself affirmed that he had a soul;—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He then changed his ground, and said that our Lord did not take a rational soul, but that the Word supplied its place. Ruffinus states that this heresy was first condemned at Rome by Damasus, when the Alexandrian prelate Peter was there in exile, which would be between A.D. 373—377; afterwards it was condemned at Alexandria, and again at Constantinople, A.D. 381. After this latter council, those who had embraced the opinion left the Church, and had bishops, and doctrines, and churches of their own.* Such is the outline of the heresy to which Vitalis is made to belong.

Vitalis is described as being originally a pres-

* Ruff. Hist. Eccl. ii. 20.

byter of Meletius at Antioch, illustrious for his life and conversation, and for his care over his people, and on these accounts greatly beloved by them; but, from not having been allowed by his brother presbyter Flavian to see his bishop Meletius in the customary manner, he turned Apollinarian. A story less worthy of belief can hardly be imagined. It is added that, owing to the excellency of his character, he had many followers, and that these were called Vitalians; while he is also said at this time to have been consecrated bishop of Antioch by Apollinaris. The two stories seem inconsistent. Besides, there is a very strong probability that Apollinaris was only a Reader in the church, and never attained the office of bishop, and consequently that he could not make one. Such is the story respecting Vitalis and his bishopric. The only time in which he appears, or rather is supposed to be present on the stage, was during the five months in which Gratian was virtually sole emperor. The story is thus detailed by Theodoret*:—Gratian had passed a law that the exiled prelates should be restored to their people, and that the churches should be given to those who communicated with Damasus. Along with this law he sent Sapor, one of his *magistri militum*, to put it in force. Sapor, thus commissioned, came to Antioch (it is the only place he is known to have approached for this purpose, such was the absorbing attraction of Paulinus's little sect), and there he

* Hist. Eccl. v. 3.

found the Church divided into three parts: the Paulinians, the Meletians, and the Apollinarians. He published the law, and, to his distress, found that three parties appeared, each claiming this desired communion. What was to be done? The presbyter Flavian cut the knot. He said to Paulinus, "How can you be in communion with Damasus? He confesses one *ousia* and three *hypostases*, and you say that there is only one *hypostasis*." Paulinus makes no reply. Flavian turns to Apollinaris; but Apollinaris, not being bishop of Antioch, could not have claimed the churches for himself, but only as agent for Vitalis, conscious, I suppose, that his bishop was but a make-believe: "And you, my friend, with what face can you claim to be in communion with Damasus, when you know that Damasus believes that our Lord took perfect man, while you exclude our rational soul from salvation." Apollinaris has not a word to say; he is as dumb as Vitalis. Meletius, then, turning to the figure Paulinus, graciously says, "Suppose that we neither of us sit upon the episcopal chair. Let us put the bible upon it, and sit on either side; and let us, during our lives, each rule our own flock, and the survivor rule the whole." Paulinus, again, makes no answer; and Sapor immediately gives the churches to Meletius.

Of course this absurd story is a fabrication. Not only did Gratian make no such law, but at this time he proclaimed freedom of worship to all

* Soer. Hist. Eccl.

sects and parties, except the Eunomians, Photinians, and Manichees. Sapor, therefore, never could have been sent to Antioch on such a business, even if we could imagine that at such a time, and amidst such dreadful difficulties as the empire was involved in, Gratian could have concerned himself about a little sect at Antioch, contemptible even on their own showing, and of no more importance in the commonwealth than a conventicle in one of our larger towns. The attempt to force a belief of the existence of Paulinus, independently of the fabulous character of the stories and documents with which his name is inseparably connected, is too laboured not to excite the gravest suspicion. We have seen that the moment the Western bishops are recalled from years of exile, their first thought is made to be—the little sect at Antioch. Again: when the Barbarians are ravaging the empire, and Gratian's throne is tottering under him, the little sect carries away one of his superior officers to Antioch. But still, for all that, the reader will observe that now, as then, Meletius remains undisputed possessor of the churches. He is in full communion with all the East. All things go on just as they would have done had there been no Paulinus or Vitalis. They have not a word to say in the drama. When Meletius leaves the stage, the scene-shifters enter, and remove the figures.

Let us now proceed out of the "Histories," and see, as we have done in the case of Paulinus, what other testimony there can be adduced to give

Vitalis what, in spite of his name, he never seems to have possessed. And, first, Epiphanius gives an account of an interview with Paulinus and Vitalis at Antioch; but his own character has first to be established before he can be allowed to be a witness for others.

The next witness that shall be summoned is Gregory of Nazianzum. He is the reputed author of two letters to one Cledonius. Their assumed date is A.D. 382. I believe neither to have been his composition. In the second of these he is made to say — “That they may not accuse us for having formerly received, while we now repudiate, the creed of our beloved Vitalis, which he gave in writing when asked by the blessed Damasus, bishop of Rome, I wish to say a few words. . . . Since, therefore, this language, when favourably interpreted, is pious, but, when unfavourably interpreted, is impious, what wonder is there, if even the words of Vitalius (since we wished to do so) we should have favourably interpreted, while others, looking at the meaning of the words, were displeased; which seems to me to be the reason why Damasus, when better instructed, and at the same time learning that they persisted in their former manner of teaching, excommunicated them, and anathematised their creed, angry with the fraud they had practised upon his unsuspecting mind.”

Against the letter in which these extracts are found I have several objections. I will give two or three, for they are enough.

(1.) The beloved Vitalis, according to the story, had been for some time heretical bishop of Antioch.

(2.) Its style. They who are acquainted with the terse style of Gregory, will never imagine this letter to have been composed by him. It may be safely condemned on that ground alone.

(3.) Its theology. Gregory, it must be remembered, is called "The Theologian" of the ancient Church. An extract from this letter shall be presented to the reader; and he may exercise his own judgment, whether it can be the composition of the most exquisitely finished theologian of antiquity. Speaking of the Apollinarians, or the Vitalians, he says: "Thus the words, 'we have the mind of Christ' (1 Cor. ii. 16.), they perversely and very foolishly interpret, saying that the Godhead is the mind of Christ; not understanding it as we do, that they who, by purifying their own minds in imitation of that mind which our Saviour received, and bringing it as far as is possible into unison with it, have the mind of Christ; as also they may be said to have the flesh of Christ, who exercise their flesh, and become, in this respect, one body, and joint partakers of Christ (Eph. iii. 6.); and, as we have 'borne the image of the earthy, so,' he says, 'we shall bear also the image of the heavenly' (1 Cor. xv. 39.).

"Thus a perfect man in their view is not one who has experienced humanity in every respect, yet without sin, but the mixture of God with flesh; 'for,' say they, 'what can be more perfect than this?'

“Thus also, with respect to the incarnation. They mischievously interpret the word, ‘to put on man’s nature,’ not interpreting it; ‘he was in man, whom he had fastened around himself’ (περιέπηξεν), according, as it is said, ‘he knew what was in man’ (John, ii. 25); but they interpret it, that he conversed with men, and dwelt among them; and flying to that expression afterwards, ‘he was seen upon the earth, and conversed with men,’” (Baruch, iii. 38.)

This is Apollinarianism; the writer was either so ignorant as not to know what truth was, or even heresy was assumed to ensure belief in this Roman story.

Again: this letter states that the creed of the Apollinarians had only been in existence thirty years. The letter is said to have been written in A.D. 382. But a creed supposes the previous formation of a sect or party, with its ministers and separate places of worship; Ruffinus, however, says it was only after the council, A.D. 381, that the sect had its creed, &c.; and there I think he is partly right.

But enough has been said to relieve Gregory from the disgrace of having written such a letter.

The first letter to Cledonius was, I doubt not, from its theological language, composed long after Gregory was laid in his grave.

The passage in it relating to the Apollinarians is this: “And this is not the only evil (although it is an evil if men implant in the hearts of the simple their heresy by means of more cunning

persons), but they speak falsely of us as being of the same opinion with them, throwing a bait round their hook, and under this cloak gratifying their evil mind, and making our simplicity (whereby we regarded them as brothers and not as enemies) a means of wickedness. Not only so, but they say, as I hear, that they have been received by a Western synod, by which formerly they had been condemned, *as every one knows*. If then the Apollinarians, either now or formerly, have been received, let them show it, and we will be satisfied. *It will then be clear that they have subscribed to orthodoxy. It cannot be otherwise if they have been received.* They will clearly show it either by a synodal tomos, or by letters of communion, for this is the law of synods."

As this letter refers to the law of synods, it, as well as the other, shall now be viewed, not with respect to their particular marks of forgery or absurdity, but on the general principles of canon law prevailing at that time. In these inquiries it is always important that this should be kept in view. The law of the Church, as shown by the fifth Nicene canon, was, that all ecclesiastical questions should be decided in the province where they arose; that was the universal law. The inquiry could not be removed from the province without an imperial rescript. A statement that Damasus, bishop of Rome, had deposed a Syrian bishop, without such imperial authority, is in itself, without any further inquiry, a proof that the docu-

ment containing it is a forgery. Of this, I think, the investigations through which I have led the reader will have abundantly satisfied him. He will always have found that documents containing such statements have borne other marks, clearly showing them to be forgeries. A letter from Damasus, in synod or out of it, to any individual, treating him as in communion with him, would have been only the expression of his own opinion of his orthodoxy. Beyond that it was waste paper.

The forger betrays himself and his object when, speaking of Damasus having excommunicated the Oriental Apollinarians, he says, "as is well known to every one;" he might too have said, "as we wish it to be well known to every one;" and also when he speaks of the conviction which the Orientals would have felt of the orthodoxy of the Apollinarians, had Damasus received them into his communion.

But there is another letter, one professing to have been written by Damasus, bishop of Rome, to Paulinus, bishop of Antioch.

In it, Damasus informs Paulinus that he had "lately sent him a letter by his son Vitalis, leaving every thing (but what, or of what kind, is not said) to the judgment and pleasure of Paulinus; and that, by another letter which he had sent by a presbyter of the name of Petronius, he had informed Paulinus that, at the time of Vitalis's departure, he had been somewhat uncomfortable [in what way is not stated]. But lest any scruples should remain in the mind of Paulinus, or lest his

caution should delay the reception of parties desirous of being joined to the Church, he had sent him a creed, not so much for his own signature, as he already was in communion with Damasus, as for those who, by subscription to it, desired to be united to him, in other words, to Damasus."

"Therefore, after the Nicene Council, and the council which has been convened in the city of Rome by Catholic bishops, they [who and when?] added concerning the Holy Spirit, and because since then this heresy has arisen, so that certain persons dare impiously to say that the Holy Spirit is a creature, we anathematise," &c. Here follow anathemas for several pages, and then he returns to Vitalis. "Wherefore, if my before-mentioned son Vitalis, and those who follow him, wish to be joined to you, let them first subscribe the Nicene Creed. Then, since no one can apply a remedy to future wounds, that heresy is to be eradicated which is said to have since sprung up in the East. Whoever wishes to subscribe to this letter, having already subscribed to the ecclesiastical canons, which you know exceedingly well, and the Nicene Creed, you will openly and readily receive him. I have not written this as if you needed to know the sort of creed you ought to propose; but, by showing you our consent, you may feel more boldness in receiving them."* Independently of all the other objections against it, a letter like this is not nature, but resembles a soliloquy in the beginning of a

* Holstein, "*Collectio Romana bipartita veterum aliquot Historiæ Monumentorum*," p. 180, &c.

play, to inform the spectators of things which it is necessary that they should know.

A portion of this letter, containing the anathemas, appears in that repository of forged documents, the history attributed to Theodoret.* It is there headed "A Confession of the Catholic Faith, which the Pope Damasus sent to Bishop Paulinus in Macedonia, when he was at Thessalonica;" and this is explained to mean that, after Paulinus's imaginary journey to Rome, A.D. 382, when he was on his return home through Macedonia, Damasus sent the anathemas after him.

This fable, however, did not suit the taste of some later writer.† He therefore removed the first heading, and put a fresh head and tail-piece to the anathemas, and turned out the document as Holstein found it in the Vatican. Of course it has no date, nor any clue to one; therefore the time when Paulinus is supposed to have received this second edition of the anathemas cannot be decided, nor is it worth inquiry. The letter is uncanonical, and very absurd, not only in the way in which it makes the bishop of Rome speak to the bishop of Antioch, but also in whatever light Vitalis is viewed. When the anathemas were composed, or by whom, is unknown.

And this is all that is heard of Vitalis. He is

* Hist. Eccl. v. 11.

† The letter is written in a clumsy, barbarous style. In the first sentence the poetical bishop—the man "elegantis ingenii," as Jerome styles him—speaks of himself in the singular number, and in the next in the plural.

removed from the scene. His name, as will have been seen, never appears except in matters or documents where forgery is manifest.

Our attention must now be again directed to Paulinus.

§ 3. PAULINUS.

BEFORE we approach the Council of Constantinople, the reader may be curious to know what befel Paulinus during the persecutions under Constantius and Valens. The bishop whom Jerome, in his "Chronicle," is made to describe as an enemy of Christ, was, for Christ's sake, expelled by both emperors. What became, then, of the friend of Christ, who, amidst all the frowns and flatteries of the great, remained faithful to his master? Cyprian triumphantly referred to the persecution which the Catholics endured, while the Novatians were untouched, as indicating which party was Christ's Church. This might be a general rule, but in Paulinus's case there was an exception. The oddest fortune imaginable happened to him. The Arians had such an affection for him, he was so good and excellent a creature, that positively they made Meletius a bishop solely to convert him. And when that scheme failed, they had not the heart to expel him along with Meletius. Euzoius, the Arian prelate, let him have a church in Antioch all to himself. So that, in reality, nothing is heard of Paulinus during that stormy period; he had no adventures by flood or field. The figure is stuck up, and there it stands voiceless, motionless.

It is said, however, once to have had the power of resistance; but that is denied, and apparently on better authority.* When Meletius returned from his exile under Valens, the story goes that his followers desired that he should sit, together with Paulinus, on the episcopal throne. This is strange conduct in his own party; a strange welcome, indeed, to their returning prelate to give him a rival in his chair. He had been sitting alone before his exile. Paulinus is said to have resisted, and the Meletians to have been compelled to take their acknowledged bishop, to whom all the Churches had been previously committed, who was, at this time, making bishops, holding synods, and in communion with all the East, while the figure Paulinus was motionless in the chair, and place him on an episcopal throne outside the walls, as if he had never been a bishop. A great disturbance then arose; and it is said that, to appease it, six of the presbyters of Antioch, who were the most likely to be chosen as successors on the death of either prelate, bound themselves by oath not to accept the office till the death of the survivor. Among these was Flavian, the successor of Meletius.

This story was invented to carry on the farce after Meletius's death. Flavian was to be regarded as forsworn. Of course there is no other authority than these spurious and corrupted documents for this most improbable tale.

* This is only said by Socrates. Sozomen, we may suppose, knew better what Paulinus was. He makes no mention of his resistance (vii. 3.).

Such is the reported state of the parties at Antioch.

§ 4. COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

WE now arrive at the Council of Constantinople, A. D. 381, over which Meletius is said to have presided. Paulinus was not summoned, nor was he present. But the reader shall learn what took place there. If Gregory of Nazianzum be the author of the "*Carmen de Vita sua*," Paulinus might console himself for the neglect shown him by reflecting upon the disturbances which he had caused.

All the East, says Gregory, was summoned, except Egypt. Meletius was president of the council. One of the first acts, after commencing their sessions, was to provide a bishop for Constantinople. The election fell on Gregory, and with cries and tears he was placed on the episcopal throne. Only one motive could have induced him to give his consent. He calls the Word to witness the truth of this declaration. He had but one object in accepting that important office. This was, no doubt, the welfare of the Church he was to feed. Oh no! no such thing. "Witness, O Word!" he cries. Then what was it? That little sect at Antioch was at the bottom of it. There never was such a little sect since the first days of schism. It is the one thought of all mankind, high and low, rich and poor, clerk or laic, in peace and at home, in war or in exile, it matters not, that one little

sect at Antioch destroys the happiness of every one, and it cost Gregory his bishopric, as we shall hear.

During the course of the session, says Gregory, Meletius the president, bishop of Antioch, fell sick and died. In his illness he had had much discourse about his Church with his friends, recommending that Paulinus should succeed him. After his body had been conveyed from Constantinople on its way to Antioch, the council resumed their sittings; and the question arose, "Who was to be his successor?" There was much controversy on the subject, and not all of it of a peaceful kind. At length Gregory arose and spoke. Perhaps an extract from his speech will lead the reader to suspect why this Carmen was composed. "*So long,*" he says, "*as that divine prelate [Meletius] was alive, and it was not yet clear whether the Westerns, who till then had been indignant, would acknowledge the man, we [the Orientals] might perhaps be pardoned if we somewhat angered the (as they call themselves) maintainers of canons.*" The words should be written in letters of gold. He then proposes that the chair be confirmed to him that now sits upon it, that is, Paulinus. To induce the bishops to consent to this arrangement, he depicts the state of the Church and the world; and really, if his statements are true, it is no wonder that nothing was thought of any where but this little sect. "The whole world was shaken on account of it," he says; "the very doctrine of the Trinity depended on it. By confirming Paulinus, a lost world would be saved."

He then concludes by declaring that Paulinus has not bribed him (which is apparently a very odd remark, only his next speech lets us a little into synodal secrets), and threatening that if they will not adopt his proposition he will resign his chair.

His regaining his seat was the signal for clamour on all sides. The bishops, he says, were like a nation of jackdaws, chattering folly; or like wasps, flying in poor Gregory's face and stinging him.

During the course of these discussions in the council, Gregory made another speech, which he also left behind him. It is of a remarkably gentlemanly and Christian character.

"Whosoever wills let him enter. Never mind how often he has changed his creed. This is market-day; let no one go away without having done business. Suppose there be a change (every thing is changing now-a-days). You know the trick, change yourself again. No ready-witted man is confined to one creed. Many are the ways through life."

Gregory then says that he fell sick, and was for a long time detained at home; and that there was much consultation whether he should resign his bishopric. The people were urgent that he should not; but still he, though somewhat moved by their cries and entreaties, was persisting in his determination, all on account of this little sect; when, who should arrive at Constantinople but bishops from Egypt and Macedonia, who had been suddenly summoned by somebody to help in composing the differences about this little sect. They took the

side of Paulinus; the Orientals took the side of Flavian; and they stood in the council chamber, and opposed each other "like bears grinding their horrid teeth, looking fiercely with eyes fire flashing." Long and many were the combats, and at last matters took a very unexpected turn. To plague the Orientals, who were resolved to elect Flavian to be bishop of Antioch, the Egyptian and Macedonian prelates would not allow Gregory to occupy the chair of Constantinople. They brought forward the canon which forbade the translation of a bishop, and he had been bishop of Sasima. This was rather hard on Gregory, who had been the first to advocate their views, and had even placed his see in jeopardy on the result. Indeed they felt it to be so, and candidly told him in private that they had no ill feeling towards him, and that they only wanted to vex the Orientals—but perhaps the reader is tired of such nonsense, and well he may be.

It was never written by Gregory of Nazianzum, not even the Golden Speech, as will be clearly seen by the following statement. The council sat two months. Gregory, according to the story, was elected and enthroned; Meletius fell sick and died; and, after the removal of his body to Antioch, the discussions commenced about his successor. If a month be given for these occurrences, I think it will not be too much. Moreover, after the arrival of the Egyptian and Macedonian prelates, some considerable time elapsed before the council broke up. I should have imagined almost another month.

But this writer tells us, that the Egyptians and Macedonians were not summoned originally to the council. It was only in consequence of the disputes about this little sect, after the death of Meletius, that they were sent for. Will the reader look in the map, and ask himself how long it would take to summon the prelates of Egypt and Macedonia, and also how long it would take afterwards for them to settle their dioceses and affairs before they left home, and also how long it would have taken them to arrive at Constantinople? The sittings of the whole council only lasted two months. This story must be mere fable.

Its point, however, was the speech of Gregory; which, from the mouth of an Oriental prelate, would be incredible, except he had been, what he so carefully repudiates, bribed. By such a remark he makes us suspect that his motives might not have been quite disinterested in composing this song.

§ 5. COUNCIL OF AQUILEIA.*

WE must now travel westward to the city of Aquileia. There it is pretended that, in the month of September in this same year, another council was assembled. We have, quite unexpectedly, a most formal account of it; such an one as puts us unpleasantly in mind of Cyprian's council in Africa, and Cornelius's council at Rome; at which, no doubt, shorthand-writers, or scribes, were present,

* Ambrose, Op. ii. 788. "*Gesta Concilii Aquileiensis.*"

as they are said to have been in this council. The reading of the imperial rescript, as was usual, prefaced the proceedings.

But, in spite of all the formalities, no name is attached to the rescript. It is addressed to no one ; it has no date ; and it contains no specific object for the council's assembling. But there is a mysterious "et reliqua," which might, perhaps, be meant to supply all deficiencies.

Two Arian prelates appear before it, men of utter obscurity. We are told that Gratian, the year before, had assured them at Sirmium that he had summoned an œcumenical council of Eastern and Western prelates, before whom their faith was to be investigated. But as no Orientals are present, the two Arians refuse to answer. "This," they say, "is merely a Western council. There are only prelates from Gaul, Africa, and the north of Italy." Ambrose, bishop of Milan, the president, explains the fact by saying, that it is not customary for Orientals and Occidentals now to meet together. They meet in separate bodies, and they (the Westerns) are now met in Aquileia, according to the emperor's rescript. At the same time, he adds, that the prefect of Italy wrote to the Oriental prelates to say, that if they wished to come they might ; but, as they knew the custom, they had not come. A true Ambrose would have had a much better excuse than that. He would have said that, in consequence of a summons from their own emperor, they were attending, or had only just concluded, a Council at Constantinople. But

Palladius, one of the Arian bishops, replied, "our emperor, Gratian, ordered them to come. Do you deny that he ordered them? The emperor told us he had ordered them to come." "Oh," replies Ambrose, "he ordered them, inasmuch as he did not prevent them coming." My impression is, that those short hand-writers should have been indicted for a libel.

Let now the reader think for a moment, and ask himself whether it was, I will not say likely, but possible, that, in A.D. 380, when Theodosius was emperor, Gratian could have ordered Oriental prelates to attend a Western council; or that he would, had he possessed the power, have summoned an œcumenical council to know whether these two obscure men were orthodox; to say nothing of a prefect of Italy writing to Oriental prelates to inform them that, if they pleased, they might attend it.

The acts of this pretended Council of Aquileia are the most barefaced imposture, and so must be the letters which are said to have emanated from it. There is no other evidence of the existence of this council but these documents, and another forgery which alludes to it. Three synodal letters *, an unprecedented occurrence, are extant, said to have been sent by it to the emperor Theodosius, as well as to Gratian and Valentinian II. It seems as if the council, anticipating that its existence might at some later period be denied, took unusual means to provide evidences of its reality.

* Ambros. Epist. 10, 11, 12.

The first synodal letter contains nothing requiring, or worthy of, our notice. The second, although, strange to say, no bishop of the Roman province is alleged to have attended the council, alludes to some fresh attempts of Ursinus to create disturbances in Rome, and prays that they will not suffer *the Roman Church, the head of the whole Roman world* and that sacred faith of the Apostles, to be disturbed "*inde enim in omnes venerandæ communionis jura dimanant.*"

The third letter is more to our purpose. The council begins by thanking the three emperors for the restoration of the churches, principally those in the East, to the Catholics. It is worthy of observation, however, that the law to which they referred was exclusively Oriental, and was only signed five weeks before the time when they profess to be writing at Aquileia.

They then state that they had heard, nevertheless, that Paulinus, bishop of Antioch (here is the little sect again; no peace any where), was annoyed by some whose creed in former days was doubtful, whom they wish to receive; but still Paulinus, with whom they had always been in communion, must have the first place in their regard. Indeed, they had intended to send some of their number into the East, and would have done so but for the Barbarian irruptions, to compose the dissensions; and they propose that when one dies (but in the hurry of writing, perhaps, they forgot to name the other party), there shall be no other ordination, and that the survivor shall be bishop

over the whole Church. Further, they propose a council at Alexandria to regulate some disorders in that province, affirming that, although they have always had the disposition of the Alexandrian Church in their hands, still they would wish a council to be called, that no one may think himself neglected or injured.

This allusion to Alexandria is a sequence of the spurious Athanasian writings, and of the letter of Julius to the Orientals. It looks, however, still more comical in the mouths of African, Gaulish, and, if I may anticipate a name, Lombardic bishops.

§ 6. COUNCIL OF ITALY.

THERE are two more letters* from some Italian council, which are as much the offspring of imagination as the Council of Aquileia. One might have thought it the same, only the bishops speak of other councils having been held, and call themselves a Council of Italy. Its synodal letters are very peculiar; and, although the fathers carried with them the same scribe that wrote the letters from Aquileia, his taste had become somewhat more depraved, and they are very barbarous in style. Ambrose is reputed to have been the composer. Forgery is as clear as the day.

They are intituled, "Ambrose and the other bishops of Italy to the most blessed emperor and clement prince, Theodosius." Western bishops to

* Ambros. Ep. 13, 14.

an Eastern emperor! There is no intelligence when or where this council was held, nor of the object of its convocation. No rescript, no hint who summoned it. But they were the same people who had written the other letters, as they refer to their previous letter about Paulinus (the little sect again), and say that somebody's appointment (in the hurry no doubt his name also was omitted) on the death of Meletius was against all law. This was done as they have heard by Nectarius, whose own election they cannot understand, as Maximus had, in a council lately held, appeared, and showed them that he was duly elected the bishop [what Church all this is about is not yet explained].

At length they enlighten us by requesting the emperor to support Maximus, as Gregory can have no claim to the see of Constantinople. They say that in a synod [*quæ totius orbis episcopis videbatur esse præscripta*], which seemed to have been summoned from all parts of the world [no name, and history knows nothing of it], they had determined that nothing was to be rashly done. But that the Orientals, having heard that Maximus had come to them and made an appeal (which, they say, even if there had been no council summoned, was right, and according to custom; for Athanasius, and Peter, and many more Orientals, had all done the like, and all sought the decision of the Roman Church, of Italy, and of all the West), instead of waiting, had determined to forestal the Western sentence. They did not, however, claim an exclusive right to determine, but to

share in the decision. [On this ground some Romish writers doubt the genuineness of this letter.] They affirm that before the appointment of a new bishop, it should have been inquired, whether Maximus had been rightly deprived.

They are compelled, in consequence of Nectarius's appointment, to decline communion with the East. This is done in no spirit of contention. If Maximus is not restored to Constantinople, a general council should be held in Rome to decide which was the true bishop.

Nor should they, the Orientals, think it any indignity to undergo the scrutiny of the Roman bishop and of the neighbouring and Italian bishops, who had so valued the opinion of one Western prelate, Ascholius, as to summon him from the West before they came to a decision. If any question was reserved for the decision of one prelate, how much more ought it to be reserved for many; a mysterious speech, which will be better understood in the next volume.

But all this story of Maximus was a fable; and therefore another letter is imagined, from, I suppose, this same council.* This letter pretends that they had received a reply from Theodosius, pointing out their mistake about Maximus and Nectarius. Yet, they say, they are not grieved that they interfered, since it would have been wrong, after what they had heard, to have done otherwise. *They had been often rebuked for seeming too much*

* Epist. 14.

to neglect Oriental matters. [How very droll!] They thought that they ought to undertake the trouble, not for Italy (they did not seek their own, but others' welfare), nor for Gaul, nor Africa, but to compose Oriental disturbances.

Such is the substance of these two letters, which are written from a council summoned no one knows when, nor by whom, nor even where it was held, and yet it must have sat for several months. The same pen wrote these two letters that wrote those from the imaginary Council of Aquileia. Their object is clear.

My belief is, that the story of Maximus and much of that of Gregory, and his abode at Constantinople, are fables invented to show Roman interference in that city.

§ 7. ROMAN COUNCIL.

IN the following year, according to Theodoret*, the Orientals again came to Constantinople. It is not said that they were assembled by any imperial rescript; and, perhaps, the whole may be an invention for the sake of introducing a Roman council reviewing the acts of the Oriental Council at Constantinople.

When they had arrived, they found a letter waiting for them from a Western synod, desiring them to set out instantly for Rome to attend a council, which was already summoned. Of course they are not alleged to have gone. Such a state-

* Theod. Hist. Eccl. v. 8, 9.

ment might have been attended with difficulties. A letter, however, declining attendance, had no difficulties. This was composed, and has been inserted by Theodoret in his collection of curiosities. Nothing perhaps, except their presence, could have been more agreeable to the Western bishops. They are grateful, they say, for the invitation, for treating them as members of their body, and summoning them by an imperial letter. They would all have been glad to have appeared in person. "Oh," say they, "that we had wings like doves; for then would we fly to you, and be at rest." It was what they felt would be desirable and proper; only, under the circumstances, it was then impossible, which they attempt to explain; but the account is so confused, that I cannot unravel it.

They inform the Western prelates, however, that they have sent legates to express their friendly feelings, and their zeal for the faith, of the purity of which it behoves them to satisfy the Western prelates. They then state their creed. They add, also, a "tomus," which they say was made at Antioch*, at a synod lately held, and also the

* Among the spurious documents which Holstein found in the Vatican are three fragments, p. 169—177., apparently of decrees. At the end of the last of them is added, "*Explicit hæc epistola vel expositio synodi Romanæ habitæ [when?] sub Damaso papa et transmissa ad Orientem: in qua omnis Orientalis Ecclesia, facta synodo apud Antiochiam, consona fide credentes et omnes ita consentientes, eidem superexpositæ fidei singuli sua subscriptione confirmant.*"

"Meletius episcopus Antiochenus consentio omnibus supra-

Creed of Constantinople, which they had published in the previous year. They likewise mention their consecration of Nectarius and Flavian, which, if the letter were genuine, they would seem not to have previously communicated.*

The allusion to the spurious Council of Aquileia shows that this letter belongs to that series of forgeries which were invented to show Roman inter-

scriptis, ita credens et sentiens, et si quis præter hæc sentit anathema sit."

Similarly subscribe Eusebius, bishop of Samosata; Pelagius of Laodicea, Zeno of Tyre, Eulogius of Edessa, Bematius of Mallus, and Diodorus of Tarsus.

"Similiter et alii cxlvi Orientales episcopi subscripserunt." Does the reader doubt it? The man who wrote it thought he ought to do so; and that it was very unlikely that he would believe it. He therefore added, "quorum subscriptio in authenticum hodie in archivis Romanæ ecclesiæ tenetur.

Explicit Synodus Romana et Antiochensis.

How could Holstein have overlooked the document containing the full acts of the council, and only have given us three fragments, and half a dozen signatures? It must have been tied up, no doubt, in the same bundle.

A council of 163 bishops, summoned by a man who sat on only half a throne, would have been a curiosity, and we should have had some information that might have been relied upon respecting the occupant of the other half.

* If it be believed that the second assembling of the prelates mentioned by Socrates and Sozomen really occurred in the next year, it is quite clear that the prelates were delegates, as it were, from the various parties and sects, and not orthodox bishops in a council; and that the circumstances which led to the synod were accidental, and related not to the little sect, but to the doctrinal divisions in the East; and that it never could have been in consequence of any Western letter that the bishops were assembled. Soc. Hist. Eccl. v. 10.; Sozom. Hist. Eccl. vii. 11.

ference at this period in the affairs of Constantinople and of the East, and to countenance a notion that there had been a synod at Rome, to which the Orientals had been summoned by Gratian and the Western bishops. But let the reader reflect upon what such a summons means. It implies, that Gratian and the Western prelates had the power of reviewing at Rome Oriental proceedings of the most important nature, which had received the confirmation of the Oriental emperor. The highest point of folly seems now to have been attained.

This Roman Council is amusingly confirmed by a spurious letter of Jerome to Eustochius* on the death of her mother: "When, on account of some dissensions of the Churches, the imperial letter had convened the bishops of the East and West to Rome, she saw those wonderful men and priests of Christ, Paulinus, bishop of Antioch, and Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus, which is now called Constantia;"† nay, in another letter, he is made to say he travelled with them to Rome.‡

Although then the Oriental prelates did not attend the Roman Council, this letter shows that they were summoned, and also that they were delighted with the Western notice of them, and

* Both the letters of Jerome to that young lady are forgeries; at least, for the sake of her character, it is to be hoped so.

† Ep. 108. 6. Epiphanius, in the "Basilian Letters," is made to be in communion with Paulinus. In the pseudo work "On the Heresies," it is the same.

‡ Ad Princip. 127. 7.

would have attended had they been able. It appears, therefore, that the Roman bishop could have summoned them to Rome, and reviewed their proceedings, and that the Orientals offered no resistance to such a step. To show this to the reader was, I believe, the object of the fabricator of this letter.

§ 8. EVAGRIUS.

It has been said, that, after the death of Meletius, Flavian was appointed his successor; and that this gave great umbrage to the Roman and Western prelates; that they took no notice of him, but sent their synodal letters to Paulinus.

Paulinus, however, is at length made to die; and another equally imaginary person takes the government of this little sect. But it would not have done to carry on this farce much longer, and so he dies immediately. A reconciliation takes place. Rome is pacified. The bishop graciously holds out his hand; there is peace at Antioch; and the little sect, after being for seventy years (although it never is made to do or say any thing itself) the plague of the whole earth, is at length merged in the Catholic Church, or vanishes into its kindred element—the air.

This other personage is called Evagrius. We know a little about him. In one respect we know more about him than about most ecclesiastical personages of antiquity. We know his family. The “Chronicle” of Jerome thus records:—

“A.D. 275. Zenobia is conquered at Inmæ, not far from Antioch, who, after the death of her husband, was queen of the East. In which battle Duke Pompeian, a Frank, fought boldly against her; whose family to this day remains at Antioch. From this family my most dear Evagrius is descended.”

In the next article but one an account is given of the family of Zenobia. Whether that story is an insertion to countenance the pedigree of Evagrius, or the idea was taken from it, it is impossible to say; but there is room to suspect that our old friend the interpolator has been at work again. It would be a fitting pedigree for an imaginary character. He is reported to have left Antioch with Eusebius of Vercellæ, after he had gone away in disgust on account of Lucifer's ordination of Paulinus. He is then described in the first letter in Jerome's works; a spurious letter, giving an account of a woman at Vercellæ whose neck defied the executioner: the sword, the moment it touched her skin, would go no further. Again the executioner tries; he has no better success: again the same. He then takes the point of the sword, and tries to force it into her neck, but in vain; the neck is the harder of the two; the point is bent back to the handle. Another executioner is brought, and with him a fresh sword. At the seventh stroke she is felled, but she is soon well again. At the end of a lying fabrication of this nature is the first appearance of the new bishop of Antioch. It is not a prepossessing introduction, but quite in cha-

racter; and it is said of him that, by his watchful care, Auxentius, then oppressing Milan, was buried almost before he was dead.*

He is next heard of as returning from the West to Antioch, and calling on Basil at Cæsarea by the way, and bringing him back a letter which he had sent to the Western bishops, and taking him the form of one which they wished to be sent to them. He then proceeds to Antioch; and we hear from Basil that he would not communicate with the Meletians, as he had led Basil to expect. He is also heard of as the person "*quem optime nosti*," to whom Jerome desired Damasus to forward the reply to his simple and modest request. After that we hear nothing of him till he is made bishop of Antioch. He is enshrined in the "*Book on Ecclesiastical Writers*" in the following manner:—"*Evagrius, bishop of Antioch, of a quick and fervid mind. When he was yet a presbyter, he read to me tracts on different subjects, which he has not yet published. He translated also, from the Greek of Athanasius, into Latin, the life of Antony.*" The tracts of course are lost, but there is a translation extant under his name of that offensive compound of lies, which the monks of a later age invented and attributed to the great Athanasius.

* Epist. I. "*Ad Innocent.*"

§ 9. END OF THE SCHISM OF PAULINUS.

It remains now to present the final scene. Very opposite representations of it are given.

One story is, that on the death of Evagrius, of whose episcopate, as well as of Paulinus's, no act is known, Flavian is said to have turned every stone to prevent his having a successor. He first appeased Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria; for he was also a Paulinian, and through his intervention reached Damasus.* But Damasus was dead and buried before Theophilus was made bishop, or Paulinus is said to have died; therefore that story will not do.

Let us try another:—

It is that Chrysostom, seeing that, on account of Paulinus, the Western and Alexandrian bishops were divided from the Orientals, prevailed with Theophilus to interpose with the Roman prelate. Sozomen was too prudent to give his name. But this story will not do. Paulinus had been cleared off the stage a long time, and so had his successor.†

Let us now see what is said by Theodoret, who had been a presbyter of Antioch not very long after these occurrences. There we might feel sure of the truth.

His account is far more lucid than the others. At last there is an act told us of Paulinus‡; and it is to be lamented that he should have stained a

* Soer. Hist. Eccl. vi. 15.

† Sozom.

‡ Hist. Eccl. v. 23.

life of unsullied orthodoxy by such a defiance of the canons. What would have happened to him if Cyprian had met with him? Only think of his treatment of Geminus Victor! Paulinus by himself ordained Evagrius, contrary to all the canons on such subjects. Still, for all that, such a hold had the little sect on the Churches of Rome and Alexandria, that their bishops preferred Evagrius's most uncanonical ordination to the most orderly one of Flavian. They not only gave him their communion, but they sought to irritate the mind of the emperor against Flavian. At length the emperor sent for the latter to Constantinople, and ordered him to go to Rome. But Flavian replied, it was winter; he would wait till spring, and then he would go. He returned to Antioch; he does not seem, however, to have gone to Rome, even in the spring. Having broken his promise once, he had no doubt lost all sense of shame. In the mean time, several bishops of Rome, namely, Damasus, Siricius, Anastasius, rather sharply addressed the pious emperor; and he again summoned Flavian to Constantinople, and told him to take ship for Rome. Flavian's reply so pleased the emperor that he ordered him to return home. "A long time after this, when Theodosius" — Who? Theodosius? He was dead and buried years before Anastasius mounted the Roman chair, and so this story will not do.

I have to apologise to the reader for making him wade through all this mass of fabrications; but the truth which we get at the close is worth all

the trouble. The story of Paulinus and Vitalis, in other words Roman interference in the East, is shown to be an entire fable throughout; no portion of it will bear our investigation.

I shall conclude by stating, that, among the sermons attributed to Chrysostom, are two in praise of Eustathius and Meletius, bishops of Antioch, of which Church he was at that time a presbyter. If I were satisfied that these were the genuine productions of Chrysostom, they would very conclusively confirm my belief that Paulinus and Vitalis are mere phantoms of the brain. Their names are not to be found in either of them. On the contrary, in the sermon on Eustathius, he says that he, previous to his exile, exhorted his disciples to attend to the Lord's flock at Antioch. This exhortation, Chrysostom adds, he [pointing to Flavian, the then bishop] heard and obeyed. When the Arians entered the fold, he never left the sheep. And although he had not then ascended the throne, he cared nothing about that: the honours he left to others; the toils he underwent himself: he preserved the sheep from the teeth of the spoilers. "He never ceased these labours until the Almighty had prepared the blessed Meletius to receive the whole mass (φύραμα). He sowed; Meletius (when he had come) reaped."

A more conclusive rejection of a fable not at that time known could hardly be imagined; and if Chrysostom be the writer, it is complete. At any

* Chrysost. Oper. ii. 609, 610.

rate, it is an Oriental and early composition, and probably by a member of the Church of Antioch. No trace of Paulinus, or of any little sect of the followers of Eustathius, had been heard of by the writer. Flavian, obeying Eustathius's injunction, had preserved the flock until Meletius had arrived.

The name of Paulinus does not appear in any of Chrysostom's works. In a "Homily de Anathemate*," there is a mention of a Paulianus, together with Apollinaris; but there is really no proof that our Paulinus (indeed it is impossible that he should be), was the person intended. Moreover, the Homily is admitted, even by the editor, Montfaucon, to contain portions unlike the style of Chrysostom. This Homily, therefore, had it been clear, could not have been adduced as a testimony to prove a controverted point.

NO. XII. LETTERS OF BASIL, BISHOP OF CÆSAREA IN CAPPADOCIA.

AMONG the letters attributed to Basil, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, are several written to Athanasius, one also to Damasus bishop of Rome, and several to the Western bishops, and to the bishops of Italy and Gaul. They presuppose that

* Chrysost. Op. i. 694.

Basil, overwhelmed by the contemplation of the many evils afflicting the Oriental Churches, had thought of applying to the Western bishops to come to their assistance. It is the story of the Macedonian bishops over again.

These letters I have presented to the reader at full length ; I call upon him to reject them, partly on the ground of their unreal and unnatural character, partly from their connexion with the other forgeries, and partly from the language of prostration put into the mouths of the Oriental prelates ; incredible under any circumstances,—most suspicious after the many forged specimens of it which have passed under our review ; but more especially impossible under the insulting treatment which the Orientals are alleged to have received. If I have satisfied the reader that the story of Paulinus and Vitalis is a manifest fable, with a very obvious meaning, he will not require any argument from me to point out to him that these letters, containing the same fable with the same meaning, fall along with them, and are equally fabulous with the stories with which they are connected. He will have already seen that Basil's letters contain forgeries ; he will now only have to believe that they contain more. And certainly anything more unnatural can hardly be imagined in spite of their seeming piety, which, however, is only profaneness when used, as it is here, to insinuate falsehood. Their unmistakeable object is to represent the Oriental Churches as under the feet of the Western prelates. The Roman bishop appears as the arbiter of the

East. The pivot, if I may so speak, round which the whole story turns is the little sect at Antioch. The story is cleverly managed. Basil is represented as supporting Meletius against Paulinus, while the Roman Church is supporting Paulinus.

I should be glad if the reader would first peruse all the letters, one after the other, and ask himself if it can be possible that such dreamy unreal letters, without a clear fact in them, could, under the circumstances, have been written by the parties whose names they bear, or rather by Basil; for he is the only writer. Athanasius never replies, neither do the Western or Roman prelates. A negotiation is supposed to be going on; but only one party's proceedings are seen, and it ends in nothing. All continues exactly as if nothing had been done, — as if there had been no letter, nor any negotiations, nor synods. The reader must always bear in mind, throughout these letters, that the fable is an addition, which he can hang on or take off just as he likes, and the broad facts of history, as derived from other sources, remain the same. And if these letters of Basil had been shown a century afterwards to any Oriental, he could not have pointed out any facts to contradict them, as there are no facts depending upon them that could be contradicted. Meletius is never really disturbed. As respects the universal Church he is the only and the undisputed bishop: Paulinus never appears.

The first letter* I insert is from Basil to Atha-

* Epist. 66, 67.

nasius, bishop of Alexandria. It is supposed to have been written A. D. 371.

“I believe that, whenever you are comparing the present with the former state of the Churches, and considering how they are altered, and that, if matters proceed in the same downward course, the change must soon be total, no one grieves so much over their present condition, or, to speak more properly, confusion, as yourself.

“I have often, when alone, imagined, if the deterioration seems so pitiable to me, how distressing must be your feelings, who have experienced the Churches’ ancient soundness and concord in the faith. As the excess of grief is yours, so have I concluded that the Churches would, in a large degree, partake of your anxious care.

“It has long been my humble opinion, that there is but one way in which our churches can be assisted, and that is, by a sympathy towards us on the part of the Western bishops. If they would exhibit towards us the same energy which, in one or two cases of detected heresy, they have exhibited in the West, help, I think, would soon be given to our common cause. The Oriental prelates would pay respect to the authority of numbers, and the people everywhere would follow them without hesitation. But who is so able to effect this great object as yourself; who so quick to see what is wanted, and, when seen, so skilful to do it? Who sympathises so much with the sufferings of the brethren? and who is so much revered in the West as you are. Leave some remembrance to mankind, O venerated father, worthy of yourself. Crown all those thousand labours you have undertaken for the faith with this one work. Send some members of your holy Church, sound and able men, to the Western bishops. Tell them our sufferings, suggest some mode of assistance. Be a Samuel to the Churches. Sympathise with the afflicted people. Send up prayers of peace. Ask of the Lord to send

some peaceful token. I know the impotency of a letter to urge so great a work ; but you do not need exhortation, no more than the most courageous combatants the shouts of children ; neither are we teaching an ignorant person, but encouraging one ready for the attack.

“ To manage the other affairs of the East, there will need further assistance, and we must await the Western bishops. The good order of the Church at Antioch clearly depends upon you. Some you will have to manage, others to repress ; and, by promoting concord among its members, you will give strength to the Church. Like the most skilful surgeons, you must, I need not tell you, attend first to the most vital part ; and what more vital part is there of the Churches throughout the world than the Church of Antioch, which, if it could be again united, would, like a renovated head, restore health to the whole body. In truth, the sickness of that city requires all your wisdom and evangelical sympathy. Not only is it torn by heretics, but also by those who profess the same opinions. To unite these parties, and reproduce the harmony of one body, is the work of Him alone who bestows on the dry bones nerves and flesh by His own inexpressible power. But the Lord performs His great work by fitting instruments. In this respect, also, we trust that His great work will become you, and that you will compose the confusion of the people, put down the divided leaderships, submit all parties to each other in love, and restore the ancient authority to the Church.”

The next* is a sort of postscript to the former letter :

“ I had thought that the statement in my former letter, of the necessity there was that the orthodox members of the Church of Antioch should be united, would sufficiently point out to you that its divided parts should acknow-

* Epist. 67.

ledge Meletius as their bishop. But since Dorotheus has thought a more clear statement advisable, I very emphatically declare to you, that it is the desire of all the East, as well as mine, who am entirely in communion with Meletius, to see him presiding over that Church. His creed cannot be found fault with ; his life admits of no comparison with the others, and, besides, he is the head of the whole Church, while they are but sects ; so that, on all accounts, it is necessary, as well as advisable, that the others should be joined to him, as the lesser streams to the larger rivers. With respect to them there must be some arrangement honourable, yet conferring peace on the Church, and suitable to your well-known prudence and zeal. Besides, it will not have escaped your observation, that this arrangement is agreeable to your friends in the West, as the letters which Sylvanus has brought testify."

The next* is between the same parties (Basil to Athanasius), and in the same year, A.D. 371.

"The good opinion I have long entertained of you, time, as it advances, is continually strengthening, or rather I may say, it is increased the more I know of you. The most part of men are satisfied with attending to what immediately concerns them ; but your care, so far from being confined to the church specially committed to you, extends to all the churches of the Lord. You omit no opportunity, either by word of mouth or by letter, or by your legates sent everywhere, of furnishing the best counsel and advice. I have lately welcomed, with the greatest joy, Peter, one of your clerks, approving most highly of the object of his mission, which your letter made known to me, — viz., to bring together the parties at difference, and to unite those torn asunder ; and, as I would wish to give some aid to this good work, I have thought

* Epist. 69.

that I should contribute a most fitting commencement if I were to approach you as the head of every thing, and make you the confident and leader of the enterprize. For this purpose, I have sent to you Dorotheus, a deacon of the Church under the venerable bishop Meletius, a man of a fervent zeal for the faith, and desirous to behold the peace of the Churches; that, following your directions, which, from your years and your experience, and your being blessed above all other men with the aid of the Spirit, I am sure will be the most prudent to adopt, he may undertake his mission. I beg of you to receive him kindly, to strengthen him with your prayers, to provide him with letters, or rather, having joined with him some of your able clergy, to send him on his journey.

“I have thought it advisable to write to the bishop of Rome, and ask him to pay attention to the East; and I have suggested to him, that (since, owing to circumstances, it is difficult to procure from a Western synod an authority for a mission into the East), he should take the responsibility upon himself, and having selected persons able to undertake the journey, and, from their gentleness and firmness, adapted to counsel and admonish the wayward, and, in general, prudent and skilful in discourse; and having along with them what took place after [the Council of] Rimini annulling its acts, which were the effect of compulsion, should send them quietly by sea, so that they might arrive in the East unknown to the enemies of peace

“It is desired, also, by some Oriental bishops, and, in my opinion, properly, that the West should formally condemn the heresy of Marcellus as injurious, and opposed to a sound faith. In all the letters which they have written up to the present time, there is no end to their anathemas against Arius; but they never seem to attach any blame to Marcellus, the utterer of a diametrically opposite heresy, impiously denying the existence of the divinity of the Only Begotten, and perversely interpreting the expression ‘The

Word.' He grants that the Only Begotten is called the Word, having gone forth temporarily for a purpose, and having returned from whence he proceeded, but denies that he had any existence before his procession, and after his return. There are full proofs that these were his doctrines, in his writings which we possess; and yet Western bishops have nowhere condemned him, which they ought the more especially to do, since, from their having originally, through an ignorance of the truth, received him into their communion, their conduct has met with disapprobation. The present state of affairs clearly requires a mention of him, to prevent those who decline union from having any pretext for their conduct. The sound in the faith will join you, and those who are not so, will be made manifest; so that hereafter we shall know those of the same mind, and we shall have no longer, as in a nocturnal combat, no distinction between friends and foes.

"I particularly recommend that Dorotheus be sent by the first vessel; that, at any rate, the next year we may obtain some of the good results we hope for. You will, I am sure, before I mention it, have felt the necessity there is that they who come, if God so wills, should not create or support schisms in the Churches, but should in every way unite those of the same opinions, even should they find any having private grounds of quarrel with each other, in order that the sound laity, under their several leaders, may not be divided into many parts. Peace should be the first object, and, above everything, the peace of the Church of Antioch, which is now in a state of weakness, through the divisions of its orthodox members. But of all these things you will hereafter have a care, when, as I hope, through the help of God, you will have the arrangement of the Churches in your hands."

The next* is from Basil to Damasus, bishop of

* Epist. 70.

Rome, and is supposed to have been written A.D. 371, at the same time as the one immediately preceding:—

“To restore the neglected usages of an ancient affection, and to revive the peace—the heavenly and salutary gift of Christ—which once existed between our fathers, and which is faded by time, is necessary and useful to us; and will, I feel assured, be agreeable to you. Since nothing can be more delightful than to behold those persons who are living in countries so far apart as we are, united through the power of love into one body in Christ. Almost the whole East, most venerable father (and by the term East I mean the countries from Illyria to Egypt), is agitated by a fearful storm. The heresy sown long ago by that enemy of the truth, Arius, is now most openly appearing, and is producing poisonous fruit, and prevailing in every diocese. The Churches, on false and calumnious charges, are deprived of the orthodox prelates, and are consigned to the tyranny of heretics. The removal of these evils we look for only from your merciful interference. Your singular love, in times past, has encouraged us. For a short time we were strengthened by a cheering report that you were about to pay some attention to us. But, having been disappointed of our expectation, without further delay we approach you by letter, exhorting you to come to our aid, by sending some of our brethren not only to unite those who are separated, and restore the Churches of God to mutual love, but also to make the authors of confusion more visible to yourselves, that you may in future see more clearly with whom you ought to hold communion.

“In making this request we ask nothing new, but what has been the custom with good men of former days, and particularly with your Church. It is known among us, as well by tradition as by letters still extant, that the

most excellent prelate Dionysius, distinguished by his orthodoxy and other virtues, showed a most kindly regard to us, and sent letters to our Church of Cæsarea, and also persons to redeem the brethren from captivity. Our affairs are now in a much worse condition than then, and we need every attention. It is not the overthrow of earthly buildings, but the captivity of Churches, that we now lament. It is not a slavery of the body, but of the soul, which we daily see brought to pass by the champions of heresy. So that, except you shortly come to our aid, you will find no one to whom you can stretch out your hand, as heresy will be triumphant."

The next* is a letter from Basil to the Western bishops, and is supposed to have been written in the next year, A.D. 372, after the return of Dorotheus and the arrival of Sabinus:—

“To the Most Holy Brothers and Bishops in the West.

“The good God, who always mingles consolation with affliction, has granted to us in our many sorrows to receive some little relief from your letters, which our most reverend father Athanasius has forwarded to us, showing the purity of your faith, and your union, and that you are pastors, following the steps of the Fathers, and are feeding the people of the Lord with knowledge. This intelligence has so cheered us as to remove our depression and to create a passing smile on our souls. The Lord has increased our comfort by the presence of our most religious son and brother deacon Sabinus, who has refreshed us by accurately stating what is passing among you. Moreover, of our affairs, as he has practically become acquainted with them, he will be able to tell you, that first of all you may strive with us in prayer to the Lord, and then that you

* Epist. 90.

may not refuse to aid afflicted Churches to the utmost of your power. Here, most honoured brethren, every thing is failing; the Church is yielding before the continued attacks of the enemy, like a vessel in the midst of the sea agitated by the repeated attacks of the waves; except some help shall quickly come from the goodness of the Lord. As, therefore, we regard your union as a good belonging to us, we exhort you to feel an interest in our disunion, and not because we are in a different country to separate us from you; but as we are one in the communion of the Spirit, so receive us into the agreement of one body.

“Known are our woes, even if we were silent. They have gone into all the world. The doctrines of the Fathers are contemned; the apostolic traditions are despised; the inventions of innovators prevail. They are inventors of words and not theologians. The wisdom of this world rules, expelling the boasting in the cross; the shepherds are driven away; cruel wolves are introduced tearing the flock of Christ. The Churches are destitute of worshippers; the wilderness is full of mourners. The older among us weep, comparing what is now seen with what once was seen; the young are more the objects of pity, not knowing of what they have been deprived. Such things are sufficient to incline those who are taught the love of Christ to feel commiseration. If this description, however, be compared with the truth, it will be found understated. If there be any comfort of love, if any communion of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercy, be you moved to our relief. Have a pious zeal; snatch us from this tempest. Let the true doctrine of the Fathers be spoken among us, — viz. that which destroys the Arian heresy, and builds up the Churches by its saving truth, in which the Son is confessed of the same substance with the Father, and the Holy Spirit is numbered along with them and equally worshipped. Seek that the freedom which the

Lord gave for the truth, and the boasting in the confession of the divine and saving Trinity, may be granted us through your prayers and energy. The above-named deacon will tell you every particular. We have agreed to all that has been canonically decreed by your reverence, approving of your apostolic zeal for orthodoxy."

The next * is from the Oriental prelates to the bishops of Italy and Gaul, written at the same time as the one immediately preceding, A.D. 372.

"To the most religious and holy brethren, our fellow ministers in Italy and Gaul, who are bishops of the same mind with us,—Meletius, Eusebius, Basil, Bassus, Gregory, Pelagius, Paul, Anthimus, Theodotus, Bithus, Abraamius, Jovinus, Zenon, Theodoret, Marcian, Barachus, Abramius, Libanius, Malassius, Joseph, Boethus, Jatrius, Theodotus, Eustathius, Barsumas, John, Chosroes, Josakes, Narses, Mares, Gregory, Daphnus, — health in the Lord. Sighs from the bottom of the heart often produce relief to the pained spirit, and the dropt tear greatly disperses affliction. But the confiding of our sufferings to your love does not relieve us only like a sigh or a tear; but we entertain a good hope that by our representations we shall rouse you to afford that help which, for some time past, we have been expecting would arise from you to the Oriental Churches. We have not yet obtained it. He who, in wisdom, guides all our affairs according to His inscrutable justice still allows us for a longer time to be trampled on in these trials. Indeed, you are not ignorant of our state. Most honoured prelates, its sound has gone forth into all lands; nor do we think you indifferent to your brethren in the faith, for you are disciples of the Apostle who taught that love was the fulfilling of the law. But, as we have said, the just judgment of God has re-

* Epist. 92.

strained your eagerness, arranging that the decreed punishment due to our sins should be fulfilled. But now we exhort you, by your zeal for the truth and your sympathy, to arise, as soon as you shall have learnt every thing (even what before now has escaped your ear) from our reverend brother and fellow deacon, Sabinus, who will be able to tell you what is omitted in this letter. We exhort you, through him, to put on bowels of mercy, to cast away from you all sluggishness, and to undertake this labour of love; and neither let the length of the way, nor idleness at home, nor let any human feelings be taken into account.

“For the danger is not concerning one Church; neither two nor three have fallen in this fearful storm. Even from the bounds of Illyria to the Thebais, this evil is extending itself. Its wicked seeds having been formerly scattered by the infamous Arius, and since then deeply rooted by many who have lived in the intervening time, and who had adopted this impiety, have now brought forth poisonous fruit. The doctrines of piety are turned upside down: the laws of the Church are in confusion. The ambition of men who fear not God leaps into places of authority, and such distinctions are openly the reward of impiety. So that the more a person is a blasphemer, the more fit is he regarded to be a bishop of the people. Priestly reverence is gone. They who ruled with knowledge the flocks of the Lord are passed away. Ambitious men are continually spending the property of the poor on their own enjoyment, or in gifts: any accurate attention to the canons is gone. There is a large permission to sin. They who have reached office by human means, repay it by giving indulgence to sin. There is no just judgment. Every one walks after the way of his own heart. Wickedness has no bounds; the people have no warning instruction given to them; the leaders have no power of speaking; they are the slaves of their patrons, having received their

office through men. Already the vindication of orthodoxy is a pretext of some for a fraternal war; and, hiding their private enmity, they pretend to be enemies on account of the faith. Some, to evade examination of most disgraceful crimes, encourage these proceedings of the people towards each other, that they may conceal their own misconduct in the general calamity. Therefore there is a war without a truce. The workers of iniquity dread a common peace, lest it might be used for the discovery of their hidden shame. The unbelievers laugh at this; the vacillating are shaken. Faith is ambiguous; ignorance is poured down on the mind through the corruptions of the word imitating the truth. The mouths of the pious are silent. Every blaspheming tongue is let loose. Holy things are desecrated. The sound laity fly the Churches as schools of impiety. They raise their hands in the wilderness with sighs and tears to their Father which is in heaven. You even have heard what is occurring in the cities, the laity with their wives and children, and with the old men themselves, issuing from the cities, pray in the open air, bearing all this exposure to the elements with patience, awaiting refreshment from the Lord.

“What lamentation, what fountains of tears, are equal to these calamities!

“While there are yet some Churches seeming to stand, while there is yet some vestige of the ancient state of things, before a complete shipwreck takes place, hasten to us. Hasten now, we beseech you; hold out your hand to those who are on their knees; rouse your fraternal feelings; pour forth tears of sympathy; do not overlook one-half of the inhabited world swallowed up by error, nor permit the faith to be extinguished in those countries in which it first shone forth. There is no need for me to suggest to you how to act. What is wanted is speed and the presence of many brethren, that those who come may be a synod, and that, not only from the gravity of those who send them,

but also from their own number, they may have sufficient authority to promote the work of restoration. They must be those who will restore the Nicene Creed, proscribe heresy, and speak words of peace to the Churches, and unite those who are of the same opinion. This, indeed, is the most piteous circumstance of all, that that portion of the Church which seems sound is divided. We resemble the Jews in the days of Vespasian. They had not only enemies without, but also enemies within the walls : so are we situated. Beside the open war with the heretics, there is another among the orthodox, which has reduced the Church to the extreme of weakness. It is on this account that we especially claim your aid, that those who confess the apostolical faith, having composed their schism, may, in future, be subjected to the authority of the Church ; that the body of Christ may be perfect, restored in its integrity in all its members ; and that we may not only bless the good we see in others, but also behold our own Churches enjoying their ancient character of orthodoxy. Indeed, it is above all blessing, the gift you have received from the Lord, to distinguish the corrupt from the approved and pure, and to preach the faith of the fathers without any hypocrisy. We have received it, and recognised it as stamped with apostolical characters. We have given our adhesion to it, and to every thing that has been canonically and lawfully decreed in the synodical paper."

The next * is from the Eastern to the Western prelates, and is supposed to have been written A.D. 376, after the acknowledgment by the bishop of Rome of Paulinus as bishop of Antioch.

"Since God, the Holy One, has promised a way of escape from trials to those who trust in Him, we, although

* Epist. 242.

in a sea of evils, still hold on in the strength of Christ. We have not relaxed in our zeal for the Churches, nor are we in despair awaiting our dissolution, bearing in mind that he who had been swallowed by the whale, through his courage and calling on the Lord, was saved. Thus we, although plunged into a gulph of woes, still hope in God, and in every direction look about for his help. Hence, also, we look to you, who often, in our time of trial, we have expected would come to our aid; and when we have been disappointed, we also have said to ourselves, ‘I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none.’ Such and so great are our misfortunes, that they are known to the ends of the earth. And if, when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, it was your duty to have shown your sympathy. It is not close vicinage, but a union of spirit, which produces that interest which we trust we have in your love.

“Why, then, is it, that there has been no letter of comfort, no visit of brethren, none of those attentions required by the law of love. It is now thirteen years since the commencement of this heretical war; during which period the Churches have suffered more than has been known since the first preaching of the Gospel. We do not enumerate them, lest, by the pooriness of our language, we should weaken their force; and besides, we do not think that you need instruction, having already been instructed by the common report. But we may sum up our misfortunes by saying, the people have left the houses of prayer, and meet in the wilderness. It is a piteous sight to see women, and children, and old men, and the sick, standing in the open air, as well in the heaviest rains, in snow and wind and winter’s hail, as under the burning sun of summer. And all this they are suffering for refusing the wretched leaven of Arius.

“But how can we clearly place this before you, except

you experience this and see it? We beseech you to stretch out your hand to the Churches of the East, already on their knees, and to send some of your body to remind us of the rewards reserved for those who suffer for Christ. The voice we are accustomed to hear loses its power. The voice of a stranger will infuse energy, particularly of those who are everywhere, through the grace of God, most favourably known, whom fame announces to all men as perfect in the faith, and as having inviolably preserved the Apostolical deposit. But our situation is far different: we have among us men, who, from a love of glory, from a vanity exceedingly destructive to the souls of men, have invented new terms. Hence, the Churches having become rotten, like vessels of sponge, absorb the heresy poured into them. But do you, brethren, become the healers of our wounded, the guides of our severed members, restoring what is sick, and inciting the healthy to piety."

The next * letter is from Basil to the bishops of Gaul and Italy, and is supposed to have been written at the same time as the one immediately preceding A.D. 376.

"To his truly religious and dear brethren, and unanimous fellow-bishops of Gaul and Italy.
Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, having condescended to call the whole Church of God his own body, and each individual of us members of each other, conferred upon all of us an intimate relationship with all, resembling the union of members of the body. Therefore, although, in respect of our abode, we may be far distant from each other, still, by virtue of this union, we are nigh. And since the head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you, neither will

* Epist. 243.

you permit yourselves to cast us off; but you will as much sympathise with the misfortunes which our sins have entailed upon us, as we rejoice with you in the peace which our Lord has granted you. Already we have invoked your love to come to our aid, but as yet, on account of our punishment not being complete, you have not been permitted to do so.

“We request of you most particularly to make known to your emperor our confusions; but if this be difficult, then that some of you should come to us, and see our miseries, which are impossible to be told. No language can express our condition. A persecution has overtaken us, the severest of persecutions: the shepherds are persecuted, the sheep scattered, and, what is the most painful, the sufferers do not suffer in the fulness of martyrdom. The people do not regard the combatants as martyrs, because the persecutors bear the name of Christians. There is one crime which is now severely punished,—a rigid adherence to the traditions of the Fathers. For this, the pious are expelled their country, and inhabit the wilderness. Neither cultivation of piety, nor a life moulded after the Gospel from youth to old age, nor grey hairs, inspire reverence in the hearts of the unjust judges. No evildoer is punished without witnesses of his crime; but bishops are condemned on simple and malicious information, and are consigned to punishment with no proof of their guilt. Some have not even known who were their accusers, nor seen the courts of justice, nor even at all been informed against; but in the middle of night have been seized by violence and driven into exile, to await their death from the privations of the deserts. What follows is known to all, even should we be silent. The presbyters and deacons fly; the whole body of the clergy are scattered. They must either worship the image, or be consigned to the fire of stripes. Then follow the wailings of the people. There is a continual weeping at

home and abroad, all sympathising with each other in their sufferings. No one is so hard of heart as, when deprived of their parent, quietly to bear their loss. There is a cry in the city, in the fields, in the ways, and in the deserts. One piteous sound is heard. Spiritual joy and cheerfulness are gone. The festivals are changed into times of grief; the houses of prayer are closed; the altars of spiritual worship are unemployed. There are no longer any assemblies of Christians, no presiding of teachers, no deliveries of saving truth, no solemnities, no nightly hymns. That blessed rejoicing of the soul, which, in the assemblies, in the communion of spiritual gifts, used to be infused into the souls of believers, is no more. Truly we may say that, at this hour, there is neither ruler, nor prophet, nor leader, nor offering, nor incense, nor a place of offering before the Lord, and of obtaining mercy.

We are writing to those who know our sufferings, since no country is ignorant of them. We do not write to inform you, nor to suggest to you a care of us. We are assured that you can never forget us, no more than a mother can the child of her womb. But as those who are overwhelmed in pain find relief in lamentations, so we do this. We throw off the weight of our grief by telling you of our various distresses, hoping that through your prayers the Lord may be entreated concerning us. If, indeed, the afflictions were those which were overwhelming only this portion of the state, we would counsel ourselves to be silent and rejoice at our sufferings for Christ's sake; since the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. But now we fear, lest the evil, increasing like a flame amongst inflammable materials, when it shall have consumed what is at hand, may lay hold of what is at a distance. Heresy consumes, and there is a fear lest, when it has devoured our churches, it may approach your's, now in health. It may be owing to the abounding of our sins

that we were first delivered up to the enemies of God. It may be also—but this is conjecture—that since the Gospel of the Kingdom went out from us over the whole earth, so the common enemy of souls, in his striving to scatter the seeds of apostasy, begins from the same places. He aims to draw the darkness of impiety over those on whom the light of the knowledge of Christ has shone.

Do you, then, as true disciples of Christ, regard our sufferings as your own. Our warfare is not for money, or glory, or any thing of this world; but we stand contending for our common property, the hereditary treasure of a sound faith. Condole with us. The mouths of the pious among us are closed, while every bold and blaspheming tongue speaking impiously against God is loosed. The pillars and the foundation of the faith are dispersed: we [himself at Cæsarea], overlooked only from our diminutiveness, are free. Enter this conflict for the people. Do not regard yourselves only, nor be satisfied because you are safely moored through the protecting mercy of God. But stretch out your hands to the Churches in the waves, lest, if neglected, there should be a shipwreck of their faith. Weep over us, that the Only Begotten is blasphemed, and there is none to gainsay.

The Holy Spirit is rejected, and he who would contend for the truth is persecuted. Polytheism is triumphant. There is a great God among them and a little one. That the Son is not a name of nature, but an address of honour, and that the Holy Spirit is no complement of the Holy Trinity, nor a partaker of the divine and blessed Nature, but only a creature accidentally and improperly added to the Father and the Son, have been decreed. Oh that my head were water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the people driven to destruction by these wicked doctrines. The ears of the simple are perverted: they have become accustomed to heretical impiety. The children of the Church are nou-

rished with words of wickedness. What can they do? The heretics have the baptisms, the conduct of those who travel; they can attend to the sick, console the mourner, assist the distressed in every way, and administer the holy communion. By these means the people are attached to them, so that in a short time, even if liberty be given, there will be no hope that those so long in error can be again recalled to the knowledge of the truth.

On all these accounts we are compelled to approach you, and each of us to tell his own sorrows. Let this be a sufficient proof of our sad position, that we cannot leave our Churches. If any of us should even for the shortest time be absent, he would leave his people a prey to the spoiler. But, by God's grace, we have sent Dorotheus in the room of us all; and whatever information *we have failed to communicate in our letter* he is able to supply, being accurately acquainted with every one, and truly orthodox; whom, having kindly received, we beg you soon to send back to us, bearing with him glad tidings of your zeal to help your brethren.

This letter* is from the Oriental to the Western bishops, and is supposed to have been written A. D. 377.

“May the Lord, our God, in whom we hope, bestow upon each of you as large a portion of grace to the attainment of the hope set before you, as you have filled our hearts with joy by the letter you have sent to us, and the sympathy you have shown, putting on the bowels of mercy as our brother presbyters have reported to us. For, although our wounds are in the same state, still it is some consolation that there are physicians at hand able, when the opportunity presents itself, to give a speedy relief to our pains. Wherefore we again address you, through the

* Epist. 263.

same presbyters, and beseech you, if the Lord grants you free access to us, not to delay your visit. The visiting of the sick is among the most important duties. But if the good God, and wise disposer of our affairs, should reserve this favour for another time, still write to us a letter calculated to comfort the afflicted, and raise those who are cast down. Many, indeed, already have been the sufferings of the Church, and much affliction have we endured, and we have no expectation of help from any source, except the Lord should, through you, who faithfully serve him, send us a cure. The bold and shameless heresy of Arius, which has been separated from the body of the Church, remains the same, producing but little injury, as its impiety is clearly understood. But they who inwardly resemble the sheep,—whose appearance is mild and gentle, while, in their hearts, they are recklessly tearing in pieces the flock of Christ; and who, proceeding out of our fold, have an easy access to the more simple-minded—these are the parties who are injuring us, and against their attacks it is difficult to be prepared. These, then, we ask of you to denounce to all the Oriental churches, that either, by henceforth walking in the right way, they may be honestly with us, or, if they continue in their error, their power of mischief may be confined to themselves, as they will then no longer have the opportunity, from an unchecked intercourse, of infecting their neighbours. These we must mention to you by name, that you yourselves may know who are creating confusion among us, and make them known also to the Churches. Unfortunately, what we say is suspected by the multitude. They imagine that we are speaking under the influence of private quarrels, while you, the further your distance from us, will be the more regarded by the people, and the favour of God will assist you in your care over the afflicted. But if, also, you harmoniously agree in doctrine, your numbers will make your doctrine undisputed.

“One of those who is causing much sorrow is Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste, in Lesser Armenia, formerly a disciple of Arius, when the latter was at Alexandria, composing blasphemies against the Only Begotten. Eustathius was one of his most devoted followers. Afterwards, on his return to his own country, he presented an orthodox creed to Hermogenes, bishop of Cæsarea, who was condemning him for heresy. And so, having been ordained by him, he, after the death of Hermogenes, went to Eusebius, bishop of Constantinople, who was inferior to none in advocating the impious doctrine of Arius. Having been expelled thence for some cause or other, and having returned to his own country, he again sent forth an apology concealing his impiety, and using the language of orthodoxy. He is then (having, by some means or other, obtained a bishopric) immediately seen anathematising the term ‘of the same substance’ in the Council of Ancyra. From thence, having gone to Seleucia, he did, in common with those of like opinions with himself, what all know. Having been expelled his bishopric, on account of his deposition at Meletene, he devised a plan of restoration by a journey to you. What it was which Liberius laid before him, and in what he agreed with Liberius, we do not know; only he brought back a letter restoring him. On showing it to the Synod of Tyanaë, he was restored. This person is now destroying the faith which he then received, and is a companion of those who are anathematising the term ‘of the same substance,’ and a chief of the heresy which denies the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit. Since, then, his power of injuring the Churches came from you, and he now abuses the opportunities which you gave him for the overthrow of many, from you ought to come the remedy. It is your duty to write to the Churches, and tell them on what confession of faith it was that he was received by you, and to say that now, since he has changed his creed, he nullifies the favour conferred upon him by the bishops of that time.

“The next to him is Apollinaris, who has, in no trifling measure, afflicted the Churches. From a facility in writing, and an ability to dispute on every subject, he has filled the world with his writings, disregarding the saying, ‘Beware of writing many books.’ In the multitude that he has written, he has erred much. How is it possible for a man, if he speaks much, to escape sin? His theological writings are not supported by scriptural, but by human arguments. His work on the ‘Resurrection’ is partly mythical and partly judaical. He says that we shall again return to the old ceremonial worship, and be circumcised, and keep the Sabbath, and abstain from meats, and offer sacrifices to God, and worship in the temple at Jerusalem, and, in short, from Christians that we shall become Jews. What can be more ridiculous than such notions, or more opposed to evangelical teaching? And in a work on the ‘Incarnation’ he has so disturbed the brethren, that few of those who have read it maintain the ancient belief; but the majority, giving heed to his new terms, have turned aside to discussions and contentious investigations of these useless words.

“With respect to Paulinus, if there be any thing reprehensible in his consecration, you yourselves can say. But it is a pain to us that he is inclined to the dogmas of Marcellus, and receives his followers indiscriminately into his communion. You know, most worshipful brethren, that the dogma of Marcellus is destructive of all our hope, not confessing the personality of the Son, but that he proceeded, and again returned from whence he came; nor conceding the personality of the Holy Ghost; so that we shall not err if we view this heresy as entirely foreign from Christianity, and call it a corruption of Judaism. We request you will have a care of the doctrines and proceedings of all these persons. This you will do, if you shall kindly write to all the Oriental churches, that if such persons so corrupting the truth should retrace their

steps, they may be received into communion ; but, if they should determine contentiously to maintain their novelties, that they be deprived of it. That we should, in a synod, join with you in arranging and conducting these matters, we well know ; but since the times do not allow it, and delay is injurious, as the mischief is becoming deeply rooted, we, through necessity, send over brethren, that whatever information may have escaped our letter you may learn from them, and be roused to afford the required help to the Churches of God.”

These letters open, as the reader will have observed, with two letters* from Basil to Athanasius, supposed to have been written A.D. 371, stating his fixed opinion, that the only way to restore the Oriental churches would be to call in the aid of the Western prelates, and asking him, on account of his intimacy with them, to help in procuring their co-operation. What intimacy, however, could there have been ? Thirty years had passed away since Athanasius had been at Treves, and there is no record of any intervening intercourse. But the notion of such an intercourse between the Churches of Rome and Alexandria, will have been seen to be always assumed in the forgeries, and, in some cases, to have been carried so far as to make Alexandria appear little more than a Roman offshoot, a dependent church.

Again : Basil makes an obscure allusion or two, which can only be explained by a reference to the spurious writings. In the first letter he says : “ If

* Epist. 66, 67.

the Westerns would show the same zeal for repressing heresy in the East as they had shown in one or two cases in the West, it would be very advantageous to the Orientals. But, in truth, nothing is known of the Western prelates between the Council of Rimini and the date of Basil's letter. The spurious documents, however, in order to support Roman authority, imagine, as we have seen, condemnations (if not exactly depositions) of Auxentius, bishop of Milan, and Valens and Ursacius, the Pannonian prelates; condemnations, however, which, although passed in large synods assembled by the emperor for that purpose, leave the criminals just where they found them, sitting on their respective chairs, as if there had been no condemnation or deposition, clearly showing their fabulous character.*

Again: in the second letter there is an allusion, obscure, like the former, as to names, to two parties at the least, at Antioch, beside Meletius. As they are lesser streams, it is stated to be the wish of Basil and the Oriental prelates, that they should be honourably merged in the larger one of Meletius. This is no doubt meant to represent that, at this time, Paulinus and Vitalis were bishops at Antioch. It would have been impossible to have merged Meletius under a presbyter. But if the reader has been satisfied that the story of these two prelates is a fiction to connect Rome with the East, this is only another testimony to the spurious character of these letters, which is strengthened

* See under "Auxentius," p. 380.

by the mention of Silvanus, probably an allusion to the Macedonian legate.*

The third letter † mentions the œcumenical character of Athanasius's episcopate. He is writing, admonishing, advising, sending messengers in every direction; but there is no confirmation of such statements in genuine writings. There are forged documents, however, as the "*Epistola ad Afros*," which were put forth under his name by such parties as wrote these letters of Basil with the object of promoting the Roman supremacy. In this letter Basil informs Athanasius he had written to the bishop of Rome, whose name is never given, to send by himself, without the intervention of a synod, some persons competent to put the Oriental Churches in order; and that they should bring with them what had been done after Rimini, to neutralise its compulsory proceedings. But genuine writings know of no steps taken with that object. The "*Epistola ad Afros*," and the spurious accounts of the Macedonian legation, indeed, give such intelligence; incredible, however, for reasons already shown.

Again, in this letter he introduces Marcellus. He states that the Western prelates in all their letters [but where are they?] anathematise Arius up and down, driving him out of the Churches;

* It is to support this letter that Valois imagines the Evet-hius, in the address of Liberius to the Macedonian prelates, to be an error for Meletius; and that by that act Rome recognised Meletius. See under "*Council of Lampsacus*," p. 364.

† Epist. 69.

but Marcellus they never condemn ; and he alleges that they had received him into their communion. But there is no clear account in genuine Western writings that they ever knew anything about the man, either good or bad. In the spurious writings, however, the Westerns are charged with having received him into their communion.

And now let the reader regard the unreal character of this letter. Dorotheus had been sent to Athanasius by Basil with a letter containing two requests, one that he would write to Rome, the other that he would seek to put the Church of Antioch in order. Athanasius, in return, sends one of his clergy, called Peter, to Basil. Basil, in thanking Athanasius, thus writes : — “ And now we have joyfully received Peter, whom you have sent, and approve of the object of his journey, which he fulfils according to your commands by bringing together the parties at difference, and joining together those that have been torn asunder.” If the reader reflects on such language, and marks its most unnatural indistinctness, he will feel, I think, that this can be no real letter. If Peter had been engaged in any real transactions in uniting any of the distracted factions and parties in the East (although for such a purpose his presence was wanted at Antioch and not at Cæsarea), common sense tells us that in a real letter we should have seen some facts ; that something would have been told us of the parties and their feelings ; also of the obstacles to re-union, and the management by which they had been overcome ; beside

a number of natural remarks which the pen of a real writer could scarcely have avoided. But the language of this letter is that of a person not knowing what to say, and proceeding on the principle of "the less said the better," and the more general the statement the less his forgery stood a chance of being detected. It has every mark of unreality.

There is a curious injunction at the close of the letter that the Western prelates are to be sent quietly by sea, so that they might arrive in the East unknown to the enemies of peace. If the state of Asia Minor had been such as is represented to us, which is very probable, such a quiet proceeding would have been impossible. The first city they had approached would have told of their arrival, and the news would soon have been carried throughout the country. At the same time, it must be observed, that the whole of these negotiations with the synods, spread over a period of seven years, were so quietly conducted, that, beyond these letters which have accidentally been preserved, there is not the slightest trace of them in history.

The next letter* is the letter to the Roman bishop: his name even does not appear.

It is of the most humble nature; the only hope of the Orientals is in his compassion. But one announcement is singular,—that the rumour of the Roman prelate being about to pay attention to the

* Epist. 70.

East had cheered them for a time. If this had been the case, why had it not been told to Athanasius. It would have greatly strengthened Basil's request to him to interest the Westerns in Oriental troubles. The instance, too, which he brings of Roman regard for the Orientals in times past, is not very natural. To support an application for some of the Western bishops to be sent into the East to reduce the discordant Oriental prelates and parties to order (a request, he says, which is nothing new, but has been quite customary, and particularly on the part of the Roman Church), he relates a proceeding to redeem some Cappadocian captives one hundred and thirty years previous to the date of his letter, made by Dionysius, the Roman prelate, distinguished by his orthodoxy. This allusion to his orthodoxy also refers to the forged complaint carried to him by some Pentapolitans against their own bishop, his Alexandrian namesake.*

In another letter to Athanasius† he assumes that the latter had been disappointed in not obtaining the communion of the Orientals in times past, and that, in consequence, he would not write first to them, but required that they should write first to him. True history has no record of any such disunion. It is only to be found in the spurious documents, the writers of which choose to give Paulinus the communion of the Alexandrian and Roman bishops.

We will here interrupt the notice of these letters

* See under "Dionysius of Alexandria." p. 189. † Epist. 82.

by detailing the proceedings of a most extraordinary character, — Dorotheus, the presbyter of Meletius. Had he lived a few centuries earlier he would, undoubtedly, have been crowned at the Olympic games, and Pindar might have sung his praise. I will detail his adventures. In spite of the severe snow in A.D. 370–1, he had left, most probably, Antioch, and reached Cæsarea, in Capadocia, by Easter. He was then sent by Basil to Alexandria. As the subject matter of his errand was important, we may imagine that Athanasius would take a little time for consideration of the course to be pursued. Basil was placing him in a very false and ridiculous position. He was commissioned to induce the Western bishops to acknowledge Meletius (a prelate with whom he himself was not in communion) as bishop of Antioch. At length he sent Dorotheus back to Cæsarea, and Peter, his clerk, along with him. When they had arrived at Cæsarea, we are told Peter remained a long time there, “bringing together and rejoining” something, and that Basil also kept Dorotheus a long time. Afterwards he sent him off into Armenia to Meletius, whose place of exile was Melitene. This was somewhere about September. There, too, he stayed some time, and then returned to Cæsarea. Then he and Peter set out to Alexandria. From thence Dorotheus proceeded by ship to Rome. He attended a synod in that city. Afterwards he returned on his way home by Illyria, where he stayed some little time. He then went to Alexandria, and from thence proceeded

to Cæsarea. Afterwards, Basil sent him to Melitene, and, *after he had gone*, writes to Meletius to beg that he will send him back *immediately after Easter*. It was during the winter, too, that these feats were performed. My impression is, that in these degenerate days, if a man had had relays of racehorses he could scarcely have achieved such journeys. But pray how did he travel? Basil, who throughout is the most cautious correspondent, is quite silent on the locomotives by which Dorotheus was assisted; but I have little hesitation in expressing my belief, that with the exception of the ship, the only locomotives the poor presbyter of Antioch, the presbyter of an exiled master, was likely to have used, were his own feet.

We will now return to the letters.

The result of the mission of this extraordinary traveller is utterly unknown. Basil, in writing to Meletius after Dorotheus's return, states nothing of any reply from the West, but says, that having met with the opportunity of writing by the deacon Sabinus, whom the Westerns had sent (but who he was, or by what individuals he was sent, or what place he was sent from, or whom he was sent to, or why he was sent at all, we are left to conjecture), he had written to the bishops of Illyria and to the bishops of Italy and Gaul, and to certain others who had written private letters to him; and he suggests that the second letter to the Western prelates should be a synodal letter, and that Meletius should write it. The letter to the nameless bishops of Illyria is lost, except it be the

same as the letter to the nameless bishops of Italy and Gaul; but the letter to the nameless Western bishops, which we ought to presume was written by Meletius, and the letter to the Italian and Gaulish bishops, are preserved. They are the letters 90 and 92, and are the production of the same pen. The reader will remark the extreme generality of the description of the afflictions of the Oriental Churches; not a fact is introduced, either about Basil's own Church, or the Churches around him, or in the East, or any where else. The description would have applied as well to Gaul, or Spain, or Africa, or Osroene. He will observe, also, a curious little postscript about some canons which Sabinus had brought, and which, Basil says, he subscribes to. Now genuine history knows of no Roman council at which any canons were framed at this time; but the spurious writings will present a synodal letter, which we have already examined * and shown to be spurious; and at the end of that letter, as found by Holstein in the Vatican, and directed to the Oriental bishops, is written —

“Ego Sabinus diaconus Mediolanensis legatus de authentico dedi.”

This is most suspicious company for any letters to be found in.

The other letter † from the Orientals to the

* See under “AUXENTIUS,” p. 384. There is also a fragment of a decree, as it is called (see Holstein, p. 169, &c.), which apparently is a portion of a Roman letter.

† Epist. 92.

nameless Italian and Gaulish prelates, is to the same effect as this last, but much longer, and full of nothing but impalpable statements; not a fact is to be found in it, except one that Athanasius would have most indignantly denied, viz. that Arianism was triumphant as far as the Thebais. It concludes, however, with the same little notice about the canons and synodal decrees; mentioning, also, the divine gift the Westerns possessed, of distinguishing truth from error. I put it to the common sense of the reader whether such compositions as these two last are natural; they are on the most engrossing topic, which was essentially one of facts, some of which would surely have appeared in any genuine letter. They profess, too, to be in reply to a letter from Rome, which was itself an answer to one previously sent. In such a letter, had it been real, could such maudlin generals have been its only contents?

But general as they are, it is represented that they did not please the Romans. Although nothing could have been more humble and more general, they took offence at the mode of application, or rather supplication, and sent it back to Basil; and not only so, but sent him a draft of the letter they wished him to write to them, at which he pretends to be indignant; but not the slightest clue is given as to the nature of the objection. And who was the bearer of this letter? No other than the imaginary personage we have already become acquainted with, Evagrius, the

future bishop of Antioch.* The reader may remember my having observed how very singular it was that Jerome should have communicated to us the pedigree of Evagrius, and that a suspicion had arisen in my mind in consequence, that there was some motive for the special and unusual information. I suggested that its object was to make us believe that he was a real character. It is an additional cause for suspicion now, to find that Basil also tells us the parentage of this Evagrius ; he could not well have added the descent, and quoted Jerome, as Jerome's book was not by that time supposed to be published ; but he tells us that Evagrius, "the son of Pompeian, presbyter of Antioch, who had formerly gone into the East with Eusebius, and was then returning, had called with this letter."

As this special notice of the clergy with whom he comes in contact is, I think, unique in Basil, I leave it to the reader's reflections. But Basil was determined that no doubt should be felt about the existence of Evagrius : he therefore wrote a letter to him ; the direction, however, is not very definite, — "To Evagrius, Presbyter." Here the addition of his father's name and his Church might have seemed less uncalled for.

We must now, however, proceed with our history. It will have been seen that two applications had been made to the West, one by Basil, partly through Athanasius, A. D. 371, and another by

* Epist. 138., supposed date, A. D. 373.

himself, in concert with the Oriental prelates, A.D. 372; and that the only reply we have seen was a rejection by the Westerns of the letter, and a sending A.D. 373, the draft of another, which they wished to receive before they would or could interfere. The writers of the Oriental letter to the West were Meletius and the principal Oriental prelates, all of whom were in communion with Meletius. It is never affirmed in these forgeries that any Oriental prelate, with the exception of Epiphanius, the bishop of Constantia in Cyprus, was in communion with Paulinus, supposing it a real story. Of course their repeated request had been, that the Roman and Western Churches would so manage Eastern affairs, as that Meletius should be the only acknowledged bishop of Antioch.

No further proceedings seem to have taken place, after Evagrius brought back the letter, for two years, when, on a sudden, Basil is represented as having heard that the Roman bishop had sent letters to Paulinus as bishop of Antioch, and spoken at the same time very disrespectfully of Meletius.* Basil is again said to have been very indignant; he wrote to a Count Terence not to communicate with Paulinus. He wrote, also, to inform Meletius of what the Roman bishop had done.

If the story of these forgeries had been true, and the Roman voice could have determined matters in the East, such a proceeding as this would not only have been the downfall of the hopes of Meletius, as

* Epist. 214. A.D. 375.

well as most insulting to the feelings of the whole body of the Oriental bishops who had requested or supplicated the Roman and Western prelates to confirm the claim of Meletius; but it would have been one of the most wilful acts of mischief that could well have been perpetrated. There would have been two prelates at Antioch, one supported by all the East, and practically its primate; and the other, although rejected by all the bishops, still, by this wilful and mischievous step, really the primate. The consequence would have been tumults and disorders without end. What sort of a letter, then, did Basil write to Meletius, announcing this event: the reader shall have it.

“To Meletius, Bishop of Antioch.

“Much travelling has called me away from my country. I have been as far as Pisidia, to arrange with the bishops there some Isaurian matters. Thence I went into Pontus, when Eustathius had greatly disturbed Dazimon, and had induced many to leave our Church. My journey bringing me as far as the house of my brother Peter, which is nigh to Neocæsarea, occasioned much confusion in those parts, and exposed me to much obloquy. They fled when no man pursued them. I seemed to have obtruded myself among them uninvited, from a desire of receiving praise. [What vague and undefined statements!] When I had returned home, greatly exhausted by weather and annoyances, I found letters from the East, signifying that Paulinus had received some letter from the West, a sign of authority, and that his party are exulting greatly on account of it, and are composing a creed to be the basis of a union with us. Moreover, it was told me they were attempting to win over to them that excellent man Terence,

to whom I immediately wrote, with a view to oppose their proceedings, and to expose their fraud.”*

This was all he wrote to announce to his friend the primate of the East that the Roman bishop, the supreme disposer of sees in the Church, had dethroned him, and given his chair to his neighbour.

I leave it to the reader's judgment to decide whether this is a natural letter, on the supposition that the statements in the forgeries are true.

After this it will certainly be expected that the Orientals would never more have thought of such treacherous friends as the Roman and Western prelates. But no. After a cessation of intercourse for three years, which, considering the great anxiety and zeal shown by Basil and the Orientals A.D. 371 is very surprising, and seems to require explanation (particularly as the Roman and Western prelates had, A.D. 373, sent the draft of a letter which, if the Orientals would copy and send to them, they promised to come to their aid), two letters† are forwarded into the West. But, strange to say, Basil and his friends seem to have forgotten the Roman draft; they are puzzling themselves to discover what to write, when at the time they ought to have recollected Evagrius. Indeed they must have forgot all about the negotiation between the West and the Orientals. It scarcely peeps out in all Basil's other correspondence during this period.

* Epist. 216.

† Epist. 242, 243.

They must even have entirely forgotten that Paulinus had been recognised by the Roman prelate as bishop of Antioch. It is never alluded to. They address the Occidentals as brethren whose eyes were beaming with love to them.

I beg the reader now again to peruse once more the letters, and also the two which had been previously sent, and to recollect that between these two periods a most insulting as well as most mischievous and wilful display of power had been recklessly exhibited by the Roman and Western prelates towards the Orientals; which was also persisted in to the present time, although it would be well known that its consequences would, in all likelihood, throw the East into almost endless confusions. Can he believe that such letters as these could, under such circumstances, have really been written; that sane men of character and influence could have said, "we are assured that you can never forget us, no more than a mother can the child of her womb," and that in these letters there should not be the slightest reference to the Western acknowledgment of Paulinus?

I leave the question to the reader's judgment.

This incredible story, preserving its consistency to the end, then proceeds to say that the legates who conveyed these letters soon returned with favourable news of Western approaching interference, and that this intelligence caused great joy in the East. Still, however, all is hazy; nothing is said that could give the reader the slightest idea of what had taken place at Rome, nor what were the

Western views and intentions. Mention only is made in general terms of Western love and kindly disposition towards the East. The exact facts are all left to be told as usual by the bearer of the several letters. After all, however, no help came; and in the next year the Orientals send another legation to the West, and address them as if they were the sincerest friends in the world, and doing all in their power to gratify their wishes. As if to prepare them for their mission, the Orientals send an account of the parties afflicting the East. The first named is Eustathius. What they send respecting him has been already noticed.* The next is Apollinaris, and the third, the Western protégé Paulinus: "With respect to Paulinus," it is said, "if there be any thing reprehensible in his consecration you yourselves can say." But if these letters be true, how could a body of sane men submit such a question? the Westerns had already acknowledged him bishop of Antioch. Not a word is there in the letter of their insulting recognition of him, which presumed his ordination to have been valid.

They express also a suspicion of him for receiving the disciples of Marcellus, of whom the Latins seem to have known nothing, but of which these forgeries assume they knew a great deal more than they ought to have known; that is to say, that they had received him into their communion, in defiance of the Oriental deposition.

* See under "Council of Lampsacus," p. 367.

And now, after all these toils and troubles, — after all these synods in East and West, after all the legations to Alexandria and Rome, after all the almost miraculous adventures of Dorotheus, after a great deal more of what will not bear investigation, and which I have omitted to notice, — what was the end of it? Nothing. No bishops from the West approach the East; there is no aid afforded to the Orientals. Genuine history knows of no one of these alleged facts. Nothing was done — but the writing of these forgeries very long after their supposed date.

I will now add some further statements concerning these letters, which will confirm the notion of their forgery.

They are never alluded to by ancient writers. Ruffinus makes no allusion either to them or their contents; nor do the Greek historians. And yet few documents or few events in that century would have been more deserving of notice. The parties engaged in this correspondence were the leaders of the Christian Church, the great Athanasius, the bishop of Rome and the Western prelates, the primate of Cappadocia and the leading Orientals. Many of the letters were synodal letters. Their subject matter was of the most important nature. It was a negotiation, if I may so call it, in which the leading Churches in the world were engaged for seven years, and embassies had been four times sent from the East to the West; once from Athanasius to the East, and once from the West to the East; and yet not the slightest record, hint,

or insinuation of these important proceedings, conducted by such important persons in this public manner, has been preserved beyond these letters, which, on the face of them, have every mark of unreality; and where they do venture on a fact, or dare to hint at any thing which can be grappled with, it is almost a certainty that they are found untrue. When, in addition to all this, the reader recollects that they are based upon a tale which, it is submitted, has been clearly shown to be a Roman invention to support an imaginary supremacy, no doubt, I think, will exist in his mind of their spurious character.

INQUIRY
INTO
THE AUTHORITY FOR THE DOCTRINE
OF
THE SUPREMACY OF THE BISHOP OF ROME BY
DIVINE RIGHT.

It is my belief that I have in the "Proofs and Illustrations" justified the history which I have presented of the Roman church during the period embraced by this volume. If I have, it will have been seen that what is recorded of the Roman Church is almost nothing, and that those acts of interference with other churches which appear in the histories and some other writings are forgeries of a much later date, manifestly written to create a belief in a supremacy which had never existed, but which, at the time they were made, the Roman Church was endeavouring to introduce. I shall conclude this volume by an inquiry whether there is any evidence in the writings of this period that the Church acknowledged any supremacy by divine right in the bishop of Rome, which is the present pretension of his party. On this account the inquiry forms part of the "History of the Church of Rome."

The pretension of the Roman Church is, that its bishop, as successor of St. Peter — to whom they say the government of the whole church was committed by our Lord as the regular bishop, is the bishop of the universal church. This office, they add, implies —

I. That where the Bishop of Rome is professedly teaching the whole church, he is infallible in his enunciation of articles of faith, and also of rules of life, in matters necessary to salvation, or which are intrinsically good or bad.

II. That as an earthly prince has a right to make laws for his subjects, so the Bishop of Rome has a right to make laws for his subjects—that is, for all Christians on the face of the earth — so as to be binding on their conscience ; and has also a right to punish the transgressors with excommunication, suspension, interdict, &c.

III. That all ecclesiastical authority is committed by Christ to him alone, and can only be derived to others through him. And,

IV. That, although he has no temporal authority directly, yet he possesses it indirectly, by having supreme authority in all matters affecting the welfare of souls.

Such a claim will, no doubt, strike the unprejudiced reader, after the perusal of the foregoing pages, as deserving only of ridicule. He will have seen that during three hundred and eighty-four years, thirty-six of these awful personages, all, too, with one exception, apparently orthodox,—to say nothing of the Arian thirty-seventh (who, as it

appears to me, has as good a claim to the Roman succession as any of the other thirty-six, and a better than nine-tenths of them),—passed through the world, and yet that, beyond their names, we scarcely know more about them than about their humble neighbours, the bishops of Gubio ; while he will have seen (what must have aroused his suspicions) the most barefaced impositions practised upon the credulity of mankind to gain credit for this fable about them.

Nothing could save a claim like this from the most unredeemable ridicule, had it not been and were it not still the faith of a large portion of Christendom. This faith was, no doubt, in a great degree produced and maintained by such stories as I have been exposing. They were auxiliary to attempts made on the weakness of the Churches to throw around them the shackles of Rome. If, however, the question be carefully and dispassionately examined, it will be acknowledged that a claim like this, requiring communion with the Roman bishop, the adoption of his tenets, and submission to his laws, on pain of exclusion from eternal life, cannot expect to be met by rational obedience, unless it rests on the most clear and undeniable testimony. It ought to be distinctly proved from the Word of God. No less testimony ought to be received ; and then, no doubt, the concurrent voice and practice of primitive Christian antiquity will illustrate and enforce it. It is no transcendental mystery that cannot be defined ; nor is there any difficulty in our comprehension of

it. If the Roman story be true, it was from the beginning a practical fact to which neither ear nor eye could be shut. The committal of such a power into any hands would be an event of such overwhelming importance, as to be of necessity a primary subject of revelation, and consequently of the apostolic teaching. The Apostles declared unto their people the whole counsel of God. What more important part of it is there, if the Roman story be true, than the bishop of Rome's supremacy?

All belonging to it therefore, — what it meant, its consequences, and its mode of perpetuation — all must have been most clearly and constantly pointed out to the early converts. A tenet of more vital importance could not have been preached to them; since, however pure might be their faith in a triune God, and in every article which the Nicene fathers afterwards inserted into their creed as necessary to salvation, still, if they did not also believe in this universal bishopric (which, strange to say, the Nicene fathers did not even allude to), their belief in all the rest would be of no avail; they would perish everlastingly.

If, then, the apostles and their congregations knew of this bishopric, and that it was to be continued to St. Peter's successors, they must also have known in what way his successors were to be discovered, — that they were to be the bishops of the city in which he died. It would seem natural, therefore, that we should hear of many anxious thoughts and guesses during St. Peter's lifetime, as to the line of bishops on which his

mantle was to fall, we should surely hear something of the interest which his movements would create ; of the joy which his presence in any city would cause, and of the sorrow which would be felt on his departure. Moreover, when St. Peter's death had taken place, and his mantle was found on the shoulders of the Roman bishop, it would seem natural that the news should have immediately spread far and wide ; that Church should have passed it onward to Church over the length and breadth of Christendom. The supremacy which St. Peter had been exercising would be seen immediately exercised by the Roman bishop. It could wait for no tedious development of centuries. The spiritual authority of every bishop, the grace of every sacrament, the salvation of every soul, would depend upon its acknowledgment, and call for its immediate manifestation. The exercise of the Roman bishop's prerogative, together with the submission of the Universal Church, must have been from the beginning an obvious fact, constantly pressed on the attention of the Church.

Such would doubtless be the natural results of the knowledge of this universal bishopric in the apostolic days. But if any one defer his adhesion to the Roman claims until he has seen them proved from the Sacred Writings, or alluded to in the way I have described, or even in any other way by the churches of the four first centuries, he must defer it for ever. The Sacred Writings contain no limitation of any earthly supremacy to the Roman

bishop ; they point out no way of his obtaining it. The Church maintains an utter silence, both on the universal bishoprick and its bishop.

But when the Lord sent Moses and Aaron to deliver the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, and made them the means of communication between himself and his people, appointing the one to give the law and the other to offer the sacrifices, he sent them by name, and left the Israelites no doubt of their mission by many signs and manifestations.

When, again, the First Begotten came into the world, He was not sent without a witness ; prophets foretold his coming ; angels ushered in his birth ; the messenger sent before his face cried to his people, “ Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world ; ” signs and wonders followed him ; and once and again a voice from heaven made proclamation of his high dignity, and called for man’s submission.

But when in the more free dispensation of the Spirit a dynasty of bishops is to be established — more awful than Moses, scarcely less awful, if their claims with their consequences be true, than the Son of God Himself, whose especial vicar they profess to be, — no voice ushered in its advent, — no signs or wonders followed it, manifesting its divine authority. The Word of God was silent ; the Church had no warning ; and for four centuries no one seems to have known of it. All on the face of the earth, however pure their faith in other respects, perished in unbelief, without one warning voice to save them from perdition.

I will now present to the reader the proofs of what, if the Roman theory be true, must be regarded as utterly incredible, — the ignorance of the Churches during these four centuries of these stupendous claims. And if this be clearly shown, I think he will be constrained to take another view of this question, and conclude that if these claims and powers were not publicly known, it was because they had no existence.

I shall first inquire, whether the Church, during this period, had any knowledge of St. Peter having been the universal bishop; and next whether they had any knowledge of the bishops of Rome, as his successors, holding that office.

But before I commence the inquiry, I wish to make one or two observations. I cannot form an idea of a supremacy other than a *practical* supremacy. I mean, that if a person profess to be bishop of a see or province, I expect to see him performing the functions of a bishop of that see or province; and if he profess to be bishop of the Universal Church, I expect to see him performing the functions of a universal bishop, and that no one else but himself is performing episcopal functions within the Church, except it be shown that they are acting, either under, or in avowed defiance of, his authority. If, then, on reading the New Testament, I see the other apostles exercising everywhere equal power with St. Peter, and without any reference to his authority, or any attempt on his part to hinder them; and if I also see that the Church for nearly four centuries has left no

evidence behind it that they knew of any difference among the powers or authority of the apostles, and never acknowledged any submission to the Roman prelate, on the ground of any divine commission of the Church to his care, I shall feel amply satisfied, and my readers, I think, will also, that no such universal bishopric by divine right ever existed.

In continuing this inquiry, I shall divide the Ante-Nicene Church into its three great divisions, — the *Eastern*, the *Alexandrian*, and the *Western*; and I shall take their testimony separately. This distinction is not a merely geographical one. The three divisions were essentially distinct, and, as I have said, had each their peculiar intellectual characteristics, which affected even their views of theology.

That St. Peter was an eminent servant of Christ cannot be disputed; but our question relates merely to his alleged supremacy; and, in the first place, what evidence does the history of the Christian church, as contained in the New Testament, furnish on this point?

In whatever honour or respect St. Peter may have been held by his brother apostles and the Churches, there is no statement in the Acts or Letters of the Apostles which gives the slightest hint that this honour and respect were paid to him as to one who had authority over them (to say nothing of supremacy over the Church) imparted by their Lord. Indeed, it may safely be affirmed that the New Testament not only does not support

the idea of Peter's supremacy, but does, by anticipation, refute it, as strongly as it is possible to refute any doctrine, which had never at the time been surmised or dreamed of.

It is, however, necessary more fully to examine the uninspired writings of this period, and to inquire whether they had any idea that the Church was committed to the care of St. Peter alone and exclusively.

§ 1. THE EASTERN CHURCH.

THIS portion of the Universal Church, comprising Asia Minor, Antioch, Palestine, and the countries still further to the East, contained more than the usual proportion of Christians, and numbered among its members many important writers, whose productions, partly from the decline of the Greek Church and the inroad of infidels, and partly from the ignorance in the West of the Greek language, have now perished. This loss is deeply to be deplored. Had the writings of the Greek Church survived the middle ages, church history, both internally and externally, must have received the most valuable elucidation. Some of their productions, however, have reached us, and notices of works and extracts are furnished by Eusebius.

(1.) Among the former are the Epistles of Ignatius, supposing them to have been written by him. If, as the Roman writers say, there was only one bishop between him and St. Peter in the see of

Antioch, his letters might have been expected to have furnished valuable support to the Roman theory, particularly as one of them is directed to that church, and the migration of the supremacy from Antioch to Rome may be supposed to have been yet fresh in his memory, and still more so in that of his correspondents. Strange as it may seem, however, there is not the slightest allusion to this supremacy which had nearly fallen upon his own shoulders; and there is only one mention of St. Peter, and that is made in a manner which implies a perfect equality with St. Paul. He says to the Romans, "Not as Peter and Paul do I give you command: they were apostles; while I am one condemned: they were free; while I, even to this present hour, am a slave."

(2.) Papias*, the next writer who mentions St. Peter, is called a disciple of St. John. He has been already mentioned† as bishop of Hierapolis in Asia, and the author of several books of various merit. In the preface to one of his exegetical works he states, to the party for whom he wrote it, "I shall not scruple to join to my own interpretations whatever at any time I have rightly learnt from the elders, and well borne in mind, assuring you of their truth. For I did not take pleasure, like the multitude, in the men who spoke much, but in those who spoke truly. Nor did I pay attention to those who recorded precepts foreign to

* See Routh's *Reliq. Sac.* i. 7.

† See before, p. 21.

our faith, but precepts which had been given by our Lord, and came from the Truth itself. And if any disciple of the elders came to me, I inquired of him their words; — what Andrew or what Peter had said; what Philip, or Thomas, or James, or John, or Matthew had said, or any other of our Lord's disciples." This extract seems to show that Peter was, in his opinion, only as one of the apostles, and invested with no supremacy over the others.

(3.) A similar view must have been taken by Serapion, eighth bishop of Antioch, at the close of the second century, in a work which he wrote on a spurious book called the Gospel of St. Peter. He said, "We receive Peter and the other apostles as Christ; but spurious writings passing under their names we reject."*

Here, too, there is no distinction made between Peter and his brethren: they equally represented Christ.

§ 2. THE ALEXANDRIAN CHURCH.

LET us now inquire what the writers of the Alexandrian Church have said on St. Peter's exclusive government of the Universal Church. Of the Alexandrian Church we have magnificent remains, whether we regard their extent or the talents and learning of the writers; and, from the variety of the topics on which they write, some bearing directly upon the subject, there can be no doubt, if

* See Routh's Reliq. Sac. i. 452.

the supremacy of St. Peter was an acknowledged (and therefore a practical) doctrine, of its being found frequently and distinctly introduced in their writings; while, as a matter of course, no teaching of a contrary tendency will appear.

The two writers whose works have largely descended to us are Clement and Origen, each, as we have seen, in succession, presidents of the catechetical school at Alexandria, and flourishing between the years A. D. 190—240. The writings of the former are, however, silent upon any supremacy of St. Peter. Clement makes no mention of any distinctions of rank or power among the apostles.

The writings of his pupil and successor, Origen, are still more numerous. They consist of treatises, polemical works, and very copious expositions of the books of the Old and New Testament; but, on examination, it will be found that they contain no support to the idea that the Universal Church was committed specially to the care of St. Peter; nay, they very clearly show us that their author had never even heard of such a notion. It must be remembered that the supposed consequence of Peter's supremacy,—namely, the Roman supremacy,—must, if true, have been seen everywhere, and in full exercise, in Origen's days. It had been in existence nearly two centuries. Its importance for salvation could not have been magnified too highly. Witness its place among the doctrines of the present Roman Church. Every approach to it must have paved the way for an allusion to it. Witness the painful efforts which modern Roman writers make to

extract the doctrine from what has no connection with it. If, then, when the subject is brought directly before Origen he never once makes even the slightest allusion to it, or its consequences, it is fair to conclude — it is almost a demonstration — that he had never heard of it.

When Origen speaks of the apostles, it is in a manner which leads the reader to conclude that there is no difference in power or authority among them. He calls all the apostles kings*, without any discrimination. Hence he says our Lord is aptly called King of kings. He compares them to the silver columns of the tabernacle, and the head of these columns is Christ; and, pursuing the metaphor, he calls faith in the Trinity the rope by which the whole church is sustained. The apostles are all, without distinction, the foundations of the whole building of Christianity.†. Still, although all were equal, Jesus did not show himself to all at all times. At the transfiguration three were chosen, — Peter, James, and John, — because, he says, they alone were capable of beholding his glory. After the Resurrection, Peter saw our Lord as the first fruits, then the twelve, then the five hundred, then James, last of all Paul.‡

Again, he calls Paul the teacher of the Church§, the most learned of pontiffs, the most skilful of priests, the chiefest of the apostles.|| He speaks of

* Hom. in Numb. xii. 2.

† Hom. in Ex. ix. 3.

‡ Contr. Cels. ii. 64, 65.

§ Hom. in Ex. v. 1.

|| Hom. in Numb. iii. 3.

him as a lawgiver in ecclesiastical matters, without any allusion to a superior. Indeed, such epithets preclude any supposition of the kind.*

Again, he compares John and Peter on terms of perfect equality; and states that John reposed on the bosom of our Lord as a mark of honour.†

But it is not by such inferences that we are left to conjecture his relative views of the apostles. The question comes directly before him in his comment on Matt. xviii. 1. "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

In his remarks on this passage‡, after saying that the disciples having heard the conversation between our Lord and Peter, after the demand of the tribute by the collector, he proceeds:—

"It seems to me that the disciples having considered this as a very great mark of honour paid by Jesus to Peter, and that he had thereby adjudged him to be greater than the others, wished to learn accurately from him by inquiry whether he (as they were suspecting) pronounced Peter to be greater than them; and at the same time they hoped also to know the reason of the preference. This it is," Origen says, "which I think Matthew is intending to show when he added to the expression 'that take,' meaning the piece of money, 'and give unto them for me and for thee,' the words following,—'At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'"

"Their uncertainty had, perhaps, been excited by the

* Matt. xiv. 22.

† Comm. in Joan. xxxii. 13.

‡ Orig. Op. tom. iii. 588.

selection of three to witness the transfiguration ; and they were casting about in their minds which of the three was adjudged by the Lord to be the greatest. For John reclined upon his breast through Christ's love for him ; and we may imagine, that previous to the supper they had beheld many marks of distinguished honour paid by Jesus to John. And Peter, on his confession, had been pronounced 'blessed' when he had said, 'Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God;' and yet again, through the saying, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men,' they were in doubt whether he were the greater, or one of the sons of Zebedee."

Here, then, the question comes directly before Origen. If the Roman interpretation be true it must appear. After some observations, not exactly relevant to our subject, he asks what was their question? They had discovered amongst those thought worthy of the kingdom of heaven that all were not equal ; there was a greater and a less ; all were not equally great that were great. He gives, as examples of progression, Isaac, Moses, John the Baptist, and our Lord ; concluding that there is a difference among the great, one being great, another greater, and a third greatest.

"The disciples, therefore," he said, "in their approach to Jesus, wished to know who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and perhaps they wished to hear something of this sort from him. He (pointing to some particular disciple)—he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. But our Lord, taking the subject up in its widest sense, and showing the qualities with which he must be endowed who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, called a

little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, ‘ Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven ; whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’ ”

Origen then pursues the subject through several pages, presenting different interpretations of our Saviour’s meaning ; but in none of them is there the slightest reference to St. Peter.

It is surely, then, incredible, if it had been believed at Alexandria that St. Peter had had the whole Church specially committed to him, and that the supremacy, through him, had rested on the Roman Church, which was then exercising it over the Universal Church, that in an investigation into the meaning of these words, undertaken by such a discursive writer, no express mention should have been made of it in some way or other. But there is not the slightest allusion to it. No other conclusion, it seems to me, can be arrived at but this, that Origen had never even heard of St. Peter’s supremacy.

But we will pursue our inquiries further, and observe his comment on another passage, which soon follows, in St. Matthew’s Gospel.

“ Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children, with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him, and he said unto her, What wilt thou ? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left in thy kingdom.

But Jesus answered and said, &c.” “ And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them ; and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

On these words Origen thus comments : —

“ We have before said that James and John were contending for the chief places about the person of Jesus, and were asking for the privilege of sitting on his right hand and on his left in the kingdom of heaven, or else their mother was asking these favours for them ; and it has been said that the ten were moved with indignation, on the ground that the two brothers were surreptitiously endeavouring to obtain proximity to Jesus as being above the other ten. This having been premised, Jesus calls either the discontented ten, or perhaps the whole twelve, and teaches the way by which any one may become great and first before God. He says, the princes of the Gentiles, or their seeming rulers, not content with governing their subjects, hardly and tyrannically treat them. . . . But let there be no such conduct among you, my disciples, nor let those who believe in me, and are invested with any authority, or are considered to have any power in the Church of my Father and God, forcibly rule over their own brethren, or use their authority unkindly over those who

* Orig. Op. tom. iii. 722.

have fled to my religion. If any one wishes to be accounted great with my Father, and to excel his brethren, let him be the servant of all those among whom he wishes to be the greatest. But if any desires the first place near me, let him know that he will be preferred to no one, to whom, when it was in his power to serve him, he did not serve in modesty and humility, profitable as well to himself as to those whom he assisted. Luke, in his account, introduces kings and rulers of the Gentiles, warning those who sought for distinction among their brethren not to imitate royal power, or the princely love of flattery, teaching us that he who is truly the greater should be as the younger, that is, as a child in simplicity and equality, and the ruler (and under that name," Origen says, "I think that he included bishops of the Churches,) as one who waits on servants. These truths the Word of God teaches us. But we, either not understanding the teaching of Jesus, or despising such counsel of the Saviour, almost exceed even the foolish pride of bad Gentile rulers, and scarcely refrain from having body guards, like royalty, making ourselves objects of dread and difficult of access, especially to the poor; nay, we behave to those approaching us, and making any request of us, worse than tyrants, and more cruel than Gentile rulers to their suppliants. You may see, in many old and acknowledged churches, and especially in those in the larger cities, the rulers of the people of God permitting no freedom of speech towards them, not even from the most excellent of the disciples of Jesus."

And after showing from the words of Christ and his apostles how unbecoming such conduct is in a bishop, and what their conduct ought to be, Origen concludes by saying that he has mentioned all these matters to point out that the ruler of the Church

should not imitate the ruler of the Gentiles, but, as far as he is able, should follow the example of Christ.

The passage, with its comments, calls for a remark or two. It is clear at the time when the request was made, and which is supposed to have been after the gift of the keys to Peter, that the other disciples had no idea that what had been then said to Peter conferred on him any authority or supremacy over them, since, when James and John are seeking the highest dignity in Christ's kingdom, it is not Peter singly, but the ten that are moved with indignation. Peter is treated both in the Gospels and by Origen as one of the other disciples. James and John seek a dignity above him and them, and he with them and they with him, the ten are indignant at it. As Origen never introduces in his lengthened remarks this supposed pre-eminence of Saint Peter, which would have been intrenched upon or overthrown had the two brothers gained their request, it is a plain inference that he knew of no such supremacy. This is still more striking when, stung, perhaps, by his unpleasant intercourse with his bishop, Demetrius, Origen transfers the concluding remarks of Christ to Christian bishops, and presents no very flattering picture of the behaviour of the bishops in the larger sees. When his remarks are considered in connection with the supremacy of any of the apostles, their extreme generality seems to assure us, that he had no conception of any supremacy by divine right, either in Saint Peter, or in any Christian prelate derived from him; and I

think the following passage will illustrate this view. In his commentary on Saint John, xiii. 6.*, which relates the action of washing the disciples' feet by our Lord, he says, —

“If it be necessary to investigate the sacred writings even to particulars the most minute, some one may ask, how it happened that when Peter had been first elected into the number of the twelve (perhaps, because he was more worthy than the rest, since Judas, owing to his evil disposition, was hurled down to the lowest place,) that Jesus, when he began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded, did not begin with Peter. To this it may be answered, that as a physician, having many sick persons to attend to, begins with those most needing his care, so he, when he was washing the feet of his disciples, began with the most dirty, and perhaps at last came to Peter, as needing this cleansing the least of all. Perhaps, also, the near approach of Peter's feet to cleanliness was the cause of his resistance.”

The only reason that he produces for believing Peter more worthy than the rest, is that he is placed first, and Judas last, in the list of the apostles; but Judas was a most depraved person; therefore, Peter was probably more worthy.

I think that these extracts show that Origen, and, through him, that not merely the Alexandrian Church, but also the Eastern Church, far and wide, (as he was, without exception, the most learned man of his day, had travelled much, and his writings pervaded every corner of the East), knew

* Orig. Op. iv. 413.

nothing of any exclusive commission of the Church to Peter's care, or any supremacy of Saint Peter over the other apostles. He was accounted by them an apostle, an honoured one, but no governing power was known of as having been given to him which was not equally conferred on the others.

We will now consider Origen's Commentary on the disputed text of Matt. xvi. 17, 18.*, on which the Roman Church relies as the foundation of its claim; and let it be remembered while it is read, that, if the Roman interpretation be true, the Roman Bishop was at this time exercising (and had been for two hundred years) supreme authority at Alexandria, and over the whole Church, on the ground that Peter was the exclusive rock, and had had the keys given to him alone and exclusively.

After stating that every one, who through divine illumination makes the same confession with Peter becomes Peter, and the Lord says to him as he said to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock," &c., he proceeds, —

"But if you think that upon that one Peter alone, the whole Church was built by God, what do you say of John, the Son of Thunder? What of each of the apostles? Shall we dare to say that the gates of hell shall not prevail against Peter exclusively, but that they shall prevail against the other apostles and the perfect; or rather, is it not said of all and of each of them, that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' and also that 'upon this Rock I will build my church?' Were the keys of the kingdom of heaven given to Peter alone, and shall none other of

* Orig. Op. iii. 523.

the blessed receive them? But if the gift of the keys is common to others, why not what goes before and what follows, and which were said to Peter? For here (in Matthew) as if to Peter it seems to be said, ‘Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven,’ &c. But in the Gospel of John, our Saviour, when he gives the Holy Spirit to his disciples by breathing on them, he says, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost,’ &c.

From this passage it is quite clear, that Origen knew of no distinction arising from that passage between Peter and the other apostles. No language can be plainer; they are the rock as well as he: our Lord’s words conferred no exclusive universal bishopric on Peter. They have the keys also as well as Peter. The gates of hell shall no more prevail against them than him, and whatsoever they bind or loose, shall be as much bound or loosed, as if it had been bound or loosed by him.

The passage will serve to explain another comment of Origen on Matt. xviii. 15. 18.*: “Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall

* Orig. Op. iii. 613.

bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

On this passage, which seems to confer, Origen says, on all Christians what just before had been conferred on Peter alone, he then writes:—

"But as it behoved, although something had been said in common to Peter and those who had thrice admonished their brethren, that something special should be conferred on Peter, it was said to him singly, 'I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens,' before it was said, 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind,' &c. And if we carefully attend to the letter of the gospel, we shall find that, in what seems to be common to Peter and the admonishers of their brethren, there is a great difference and pre-eminence in what is said to Peter. It is no trifling difference that Peter should have received the keys of the kingdom, not of one heaven, but of more heavens, and that whatsoever he binds on earth shall be bound, not in one heaven, but in all the heavens, compared with the privileges granted to the many who bind on earth and loose on earth, the effect of whose acts do not reach the heavens, as Peter's, but only one heaven; for their power does not extend, like Peter's, to all the heavens. By how much the better is the person who binds, by so much the more blessed is the person loosed, as his freedom extends through all the heavens."

Of course this is a most fanciful interpretation: nevertheless, however absurdly the doctrine might be deduced, still if Origen had expressly stated that to Peter's government the whole Church was exclusively committed, it would have shown that such was Origen's opinion, and it would have been

a testimony in favour of the Roman doctrine, so far as Origen was concerned. But there is nothing in these remarks indicating any supremacy over the Church. The expressions relate to binding and loosing on earth and in heaven, and they seem to convey powers of awful import; and yet in the primitive Church, as well as in our own, they seem practically to have been reduced to a small compass; and, indeed, what independent powers they convey to the human instrument was never settled. The Ante-Nicene Church said that the human sentence was confirmed if it was just; but the heavenly sentence, it was agreed, did not depend upon the human. Men might be bound on earth, who were loosed in heaven; and loosed on earth, who were bound in heaven. What precise meaning Origen ascribed to this peculiar power given to St. Peter, it is not easy to say. It is possible that at the moment when he was writing (and he wrote very rapidly and extempore), he was struck by the fact that the same powers seemed given to all who had thrice admonished their brethren, that had been given to Peter in return to his heaven-revealed confession, and that he had thought there must be a distinction. Having looked therefore to the letter of the passages, he fancied he had found a difference, which might make a distinction in favour of Peter. To the former he found that their powers of binding and loosing were ratified only in heaven in the singular number, while to Peter the same power would be confirmed in heaven in the plural. What

was the extent of the former power, and what the precise difference between the two, it would have surpassed even Origen to define. But whatever ideas he may have attached to these words, one thing is clear, he could not have meant by them the commission of the government of the Church on earth to Peter exclusively, inasmuch as he admitted that whatever earthly power Peter had, was equally possessed by all those who had thrice admonished their brethren, and also that he shared one heaven in common with them. His peculiar privilege affected some more remote heavens, of which we have no particular knowledge. But this privilege is equally remote from the Roman claims. They admit no partner on earth, or in one heaven, and it is probable that if their theory would enable them to claim no exclusive power on earth, but only in some heaven, whether far off or nigh, they would exhibit little anxiety in vindicating their descent from Peter. It is very clear, therefore, that whatever privilege was supposed by Origen to have been conceded to Peter, owing to his confession, it was not the exclusive government of the Church on earth, as imagined by the Church of Rome.

That this was a momentary and meaningless distinction, may be well assumed on recollecting that in a previous part of Origen's Commentary, — the gift of the keys to Peter in this same evangelist*, — he says:

* Orig. Op. iii. 531.

“But since they who held the office of bishops use, like Peter, this expression of our Lord, and, having taken the keys of the kingdom of heaven (in the plural) from our Lord, teach that what has been bound by them (that is, condemned) is bound also in heaven (plural), we say, that they rightly say, if they have that for which it was said to that Peter, ‘Thou art Peter;’ and if they are such as that the Church can be built upon them by Christ, then that these words are properly applied to them. The gates of hell ought not to prevail against those who wish to bind and loose. But if he is bound by the chains of his own sins, in vain does he bind and loose.”

By all which Origen meant that every bishop whose faith in Christ was sound like Peter’s, and conduct in conformity with the Gospel, had like powers with Peter in binding and loosing on earth and in all the “heavens,” whatever might be the sense he applied to the word “heavens.”

This I believe to be the substance of all the testimony that can be produced from the Alexandrian Church about St. Peter, in reference to his relative position to his brethren and the Church. Other extracts might be added, but they would be all to the like effect.

It will be seen, therefore, that there is no statement that supports the Roman notion of St. Peter’s supremacy, while the whole bearing of Origen’s mind is widely opposed to it; and when, as I have said, it is recollected that this supremacy of St. Peter, if true, had had practical results affecting at the time, and ever since the apostolic days, the Churches of Egypt; silence on such a supremacy

is a most conclusive proof that it never had had existence, even in thought.

§ 3. THE WESTERN CHURCH.

WE have now to pass in review the writings of the Western Church, and see whether its writers have left behind them any proof that the Church considered its government to have been committed exclusively to the care of St. Peter, and that he had in consequence any superiority over the other apostles.

(1.) The writer nearest to the times of the apostles was Clement, bishop of Rome. In his generally admitted letter to the Corinthian Church, he only once names the apostle; and so far is he from pointing out his supremacy, that if any conclusion might be drawn from what he has said, it would be, that he had entertained a higher estimate of St. Paul's merits than of those of St. Peter. What he has said will be noticed soon.

(2.) The next writer to be introduced is Justin Martyr, whom, although an Oriental by birth, we will class among Western writers. He names the apostles a few times, and alludes to Peter, James, and John as having had their names changed; but there is not the slightest trace, in anything that he has said, of any distinction of power or of supremacy among them. He informed his opponent, Trypho the Jew, that the bells attached to the hem of Aaron's ephod were a type of the apostles, but

he did not add that they differed in metal, size, or sound, although he had discovered that they were twelve in number.*

(3.) We now approach the writings of Irenæus, A.D. 180. His language respecting the apostles is that of perfect equality among them. In his account of the letter from the council of Jerusalem to the church at Antioch, he refers the decision neither to Peter nor James, but, following the sacred narrative, he attributes it to James and the apostles with him.†

(4.) Such is the view also taken by Tertullian, A.D. 210, or whoever was the author of the tract “*De Præscriptione Hæreticorum*.”‡ Against those

* Dial. cum Tryph. sect. 42. † Lib. adv. Hæres. iii. 12.

‡ There is, I think, a mystery about the writings of Tertullian. If the Cyprianic writings are forgeries, so is the account of him in Jerome’s “*Book on Ecclesiastical Writers*,” and so is the account of Tertullian in the same book; and the “*Da Magistrum*” story, which is made to connect Cyprian with Tertullian, is also false. All these perish together.

It is a curious fact, that, in the notices of Cyprian and Tertullian, they sometimes appear very suspiciously in couples.

There is a commentary on St. Matthew attributed to Hilary bishop of Poitiers, composed, therefore, about the middle of the fourth century. Most persons will believe that the Lord’s prayer is one of the most important passages of that gospel; but I think very few will believe that, when Hilary approached that prayer, he omitted all notice of it, and wrote these words instead:—

“*De orationis autem sacramento necessitate nos commentandi Cyprianus vir sanctæ memoriæ liberavit. Quanquam et Tertullianus hinc volumen aptissimum scripserit, sed consequens error hominis detraxit scriptis probabilibus auctoritatem.*” I cannot imagine that any one will believe it likely. We should

heretics who advanced an objection that the apostles did not know all things, he asks : “ Was anything hidden from Peter, who was called the rock on which the Church should be built, who obtained the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and the power of binding and loosing in Heaven and on earth? Was anything, moreover, hidden from John, the most beloved of the Lord, who leaned upon his breast, to whom alone the Lord pointed out beforehand Judas that should betray him, whom he commended unto Mary as a son in his own stead. Of what would he have those be ignorant to whom he

have to suppose that a Gaulish prelate, composing a commentary on St. Matthew’s Gospel for the benefit of his diocese, or at the most for Gaul, omitted all commentary on the Lord’s prayer, because one Cyprian, but of what country or what he was is not told them, and a heretic, Tertullian, not a seductive description, had written tracts upon it. Moreover, this Cyprian and Tertullian were Africans, who had lived a century or more before the time when Hilary was writing, and whose tracts, until Hilary brings them to our notice, are unheard of in antiquity.

I entertain no doubt that there has here been an excision and an insertion.

Again, we have a similar introduction of these two writers into the Institutions of Lactantius, with a dirty allusion, which I cannot think would have been made by Lactantius. They appear also together in some of the forged letters of Jerome. These circumstances, coupled with Jerome’s account of Tertullian, in his “ Book on Ecclesiastical Writers,” excite a suspicion in my mind that there was a reason for this connexion, and that all is not Tertullian that passes under his name ; and I have a strong feeling that, among others, the tract “ De Præscriptione Hæreticorum ” was not written by him. It does not belong to the third century at all.

even manifested his glory, and Moses and Elias, and moreover the voice of the Father from Heaven? This he did, not as thereby casting any reproach upon the rest, but because in three witnesses every word shall be established.”*

Although I do not believe this tract to have been written by Tertullian, or by any one in the third century, still the writer (the later the better) had no notion of the present Roman theory. If he had known of it, his argument must naturally have taken a very different turn. He would have had nothing to do with James, or John, or the other apostles. He would have simply said, “It is absurd to suppose, even for a moment, that St. Peter and his successors the Roman bishops, to whom the Lord has committed exclusively the care of his Universal Church, and endowed with infallibility, could be ignorant or in error.”

(5.) Another writer is Hilary bishop of Poitiers, A.D. 350, who has been already often brought before our notice. If he wrote the larger works attributed to him, his views agree with those of the writers above stated. He nowhere gives Peter a supremacy over his brother apostles, or the Church.†

* Sect. 22. Similarly, in the same tract, his comparison of the relative doctrinal merits of St. Peter and St. Paul is utterly inconsistent with the Roman theory.

† Addressing the Almighty, he says: “Why, if this creed be wrong, hast thou deceived me. I trusted on David, the man after thy own heart; on Solomon, gifted with divine wisdom; on Isaiah, who saw the Lord of Sabaoth; on Jeremiah, sanctified in the womb for a prophet unto the nations, to root up and to pull down; on Ezekiel, a witness of the mystery of the

He calls Peter the foundation of the Church; and so he calls his faith*; and so he calls all the apostles.† He gives him the keys of the kingdom of Heaven‡, but all the apostles equally have them§; and even Peter, he says, did not lose them by his thrice-repeated denial of Christ.||

In his view, too, the Church is not a monarchy, but an oligarchy; it is the principality of all the apostles.↓

In none of these writers, whoever they were, and however much they may use the Scriptural language of foundation rock and keys, is there the slightest intimation given that St. Peter had any superiority over his brother apostles or the Church. There is not the shadow of an idea that the keys in the hands of the other apostles could not open the door of the kingdom of Heaven as easily as those of St. Peter, or that they could not bind and

resurrection; on Daniel, the greatly beloved, revealer of times; on the holy company of the prophets, and on the preachers of the gospel: on Matthew, turned from a publican into an apostle; on John, who, from intimacy with the Lord, was favoured with a revelation of celestial mysteries; on Simon, on whom, after his confession, the Church was built, and who received the keys of the heavenly kingdom; and on all the rest, who preached under the influence of the Holy Spirit; and on Paul also, who, from a persecutor became thy chosen vessel, alone in the deep, the man of the third heavens, in Paradise before he was a martyr, a finished offering of a perfect faith.¹

* De Trinit. vi. 37.

† Ps lxxvii. 10.

‡ Matt. xvi. 7.

§ Ps. lii. 9.

|| Ib. 12.

↓ Ps. cxxxviii. 38.

¹ De Trinit. vi. 20.

loose as well as he, except, perhaps the fanciful allusion in Origen ; where, however, all Christians seem equal to Peter throughout earth and heaven.

(6.) There is one remaining writer, Optatus bishop of Milevi, A.D. 370. If his first two books had been genuine, and not tampered with, they would have presented us with the first intimation of the Cyprianic theory of St. Peter* being the centre of sacerdotal unity. I have already† alluded to the suspicious character of the statements of the first book on the Donatist controversy. The following conclusive proof is in addition. A list of Roman prelates is inserted into the second book, in the same way as a similar one was, I have no doubt, inserted into the work of Irenæus. It is carried down to Siricius, with whom Optatus is made to say that he was in communion. Siricius was consecrated bishop of Rome, A.D. 384. But the work of Optatus is said by Jerome, in his “ Book on Ecclesiastical Writers,” to have been written under Valentinian and Valens, that is, not later than

* He is speaking to Parmenian the Donatist bishop of Carthage, and, with the artless assumption perceptible in so many of the forgeries, is made to say: “ *You cannot deny that you know that the episcopal chair in the Roman city was first conferred on Peter, in which Peter sat the head of all the apostles, whence also he was called Cephas, in which one chair unity might be preserved (servaretur) by all, lest the other apostles should each be claiming an independent chair for themselves, that he might now be shown to be a schismatic and sinner who placed another chair (contra singularem cathedram) against that one chair*” (as I suppose is meant). But the whole is seen, by its context, to be an evident interpolation.

† See before, p. 221.

A.D. 375. This clearly shows that some one had used the pen since Optatus, and it is my belief that the first two books have been almost re-written. They contain Cyprian's theory and Cyprian's name, without any mention of Cyprian's works. These, especially in the Donatist controversy, could not have failed of being cited, had Cyprian's works and these books been written by the parties whose names they bear.*

I believe I have now given all the information which I can collect, on the subject of St. Peter's supremacy, contained in the works written during the period embraced by this volume. If the reader will reconsider it, he will be able to form an opinion whether the Christians of that day believed that the Church was specially committed to St. Peter's care, so that he was the universal bishop. I think he will see that there is not a vestige of it, even if all the quotations from the different writers are genuine.

It is my impression, from reflecting on numberless particulars which it is impossible to state in detail, that such an idea as the supremacy of St. Peter had never once crossed the mind of the Church at this time. Under such circumstances no express statements negating such a supremacy can be expected. What is not even dreamed of cannot be denied and refuted; and yet Origen seems unconsciously to have done something like it. But this, however, is the foundation of the Roman

* See under "Council of Arles," p. 221.

theory. If Peter had no supremacy, the Roman bishop has none; and the question, so far as it depends on any knowledge of this supremacy existing in the minds of Peter's subjects being a test of its truth or falsehood,—and it is incredible that, if it had existed, it should not have been known and most frequently alluded to by them,—is settled. And it is needless to say a word more.

But still we will proceed, for a few pages will exhaust the subject.

We will now inquire whether the Christians during this period believed, although they have left no intimation of any supremacy of St. Peter, that this unmentioned supremacy descended on the bishops of Rome as St. Peter's successors. If the language which I use in the course of the inquiry be absurd, the reader must excuse me and attribute it to my subject. The idea of a supremacy in the Roman bishop is the very extreme of absurdity.

The same order shall be preserved as in the previous inquiry. The Holy Scriptures make no allusion to the supremacy of the Roman bishop. St. John, who was contemporary with three of these awful personages, never alludes to them in any way.

Do the writings of the Eastern Church furnish any evidence of the Roman supremacy?

I believe that, with the exception of Eusebius's Church History, none of them mention even the name of any Roman bishop. Nor do we find any thing about his succession to St. Peter's universal

bishopric, of which, as has been seen, they knew nothing.

Do the writings of the Alexandrian Church furnish any evidence of such a fact?

The same answer may be again returned. Not even the name of any Roman bishop is mentioned in any of them as far as I know.

Thus we are driven back to Italy and the West for our knowledge of this wonderful fact; which, if true, must have been as important and as well known in the East and in Alexandria as in the city of Rome. It must have been giving practical proofs of its existence every day. What knowledge, then, is there to be found of it in the Western Church, the home of these awful personages?

Justin Martyr never even names any bishop of Rome.

Irenæus only does so in a chapter which must first be proved to be genuine before it can be received as evidence. It is in the third chapter of the third book of the "Work against Heresies," the statements of which have already undergone examination, and been shown to have been tampered with.* But even in that chapter there is no mention of Peter's supremacy, nor of the Roman bishop having inherited such supremacy from him. It is merely a grandiloquent description of the Roman Church.

As Tertullian knew of no supremacy of St. Peter,

* See under "Victor," p. 206.

so neither does he mention any descent of it on the Roman bishop.

Hilary, I believe, never even mentions the Roman Church or prelate.

Any testimony that Optatus might bring must first be proved to be genuine. It is at present in immediate connection with a manifest interpolation.

There is, therefore, no testimony, or none of any genuine character, that can be brought, even from the Western Church, to prove that the supremacy of the Universal Church was considered by them to have descended on the Roman prelate. But there are one or two writings to be adduced which seem very contradictory of such a notion.

The only ante-Nicene writer (Tertullian) who informs us that Peter was crucified at Rome, informs us also that Clement was the first bishop; and (since the list in Irenæus is probably spurious) there is no better testimony to be found. Let us, then, look at the letter which Clement wrote to the Corinthian Church. In a passage where he is setting before the eyes of the Corinthians many scriptural worthies for their imitation, he says:—

“Through rivalry and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars were persecuted and slain. Let us place before our eyes the excellent apostles. Peter endured not one or two, but many toils, from the effect of evil passions in others, and thus having borne testimony, he went to his appointed place in glory. From the same cause, Paul patiently and gloriously endured suffering, having been in chains seven times, and exiled, and stoned, and having

been a preacher in the East and in the West, he obtained honourable fame from his faith. Having taught the whole world righteousness, and approached the extremity of the West, and given testimony before the rulers, he then left the world, and went into the holy place, having been a noble example of suffering endurance.”*

Were an indifferent person commenting on this passage, he would, I think, naturally imagine, that as the writer was clearly seeking to magnify the apostles, he was advancing all he knew about them that tended to their praise; and he would think it a fair conclusion that what he said of one, and not of the other, belonged exclusively to the former. Examining the passage on these principles, which no Romanist can possibly object to, because they adopt it in their interpretation of the words “rock” and “keys,” even when there is no other apostle mentioned but Peter, and even when the same gifts in substance are elsewhere given (at least so the Church of the first four centuries thought) to all the other apostles, he would see several particulars said of St. Paul which were not said of St. Peter. Among others, the fact of his having preached in the West, and having borne testimony to Christ before the rulers. He would also see that nothing is said of either, except their death, which is not to be learnt from the Acts of the Apostles. Nothing is said of St. Peter having been in the West, and, consequently, nothing of his ever having been in Rome.

* Sect. 5.

Let us now call to mind who Clement was. He was (if Tertullian wrote the tract, which I do not believe, only this is the more favourable supposition) the person whom St. Peter himself ordained to be bishop of Rome. He was consequently the first successor in or to the supremacy over the whole Church. This supremacy, as is alleged, had been attached to the see of Rome by the merest accident — by St. Peter having come to Rome, and died there bishop of that see. This was Clement's only title for interfering with, and exercising revision over, the various Churches throughout the world. By this apparent accident, it is asserted, the will of the Almighty was indicated that so long as the Church should endure, so long should the Roman prelate exercise the functions of its head and ruler. Clement himself had, as in a moment, from a common-place Christian, whose opinions were only valued as they were sensible, become the infallible enunciator of doctrines necessary to be believed for salvation, the source of all spiritual authority in the Church, and the centre of unity; henceforth whoever died out of his communion was irrecoverably damned. I now put it to the reader's common sense to say whether, as Clement was the first recipient of this power, which was to remain in his successors for ever, it is not one of the most unaccountable facts on record that, knowing how important these facts were, not only to his own Church, but to the Church at large, he should in magnifying the apostles Peter and Paul, mention as a matter of glory, St. Paul's preaching and mar-

tyrdom in the West, which had no such results, and be silent on the same facts in St. Peter's case, which had such stupendous consequences.

It seems to me that a person viewing this subject without prejudice, would come to the conclusion that Clement knew nothing of the country in which St. Peter died, or that if he did, he judged it of no importance to be stated; and consequently, that he was entirely ignorant of the present Roman theory; and that in his view, St. Paul was a far more important personage in the Christian Church than St. Peter. This I have but little doubt was his real opinion. That opinion was undoubtedly held by the ante-Nicene Church, as in their writings St. Paul is generally styled "The Apostle," without any reference to his name.

The only ante-Nicene evidence for the fact of St. Peter having died at Rome rests on the same evidence as that Clement was ordained by him; and if he was, and wrote that letter, I think it is clear that he knew nothing of Roman supremacy, — nay, that he did not even know that St. Peter had been ever in the West at all. But there is in addition, what must be deemed a positive statement, that St. Peter never had been in the West.

In an oration attributed to Gregory of Nazianzum * Peter is distinctly confined to Judea.

Among the objections made against Gregory, probably, by the Arians of Constantinople, was the fact of his being a foreigner. He replies, "True,

* Orat. 33. s. 11.

I am one; but were not the apostles foreigners? Do not you hear Paul say, ‘That we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision.’ Granting that Judea was the sphere of Peter, what connexion had Paul with the Gentiles, Luke with Achaia, Andrew with Epirus, John with Ephesus, Thomas with India, and Mark with Italy, or the others, not to particularise more, with those to whom they travelled?”

Whoever wrote this oration, it is an Oriental opinion of Peter’s proceedings, very different from the Roman. The writer never could have had the slightest notion that St. Peter had ever been in Europe; and I believe that in the fourth century such was the general impression; it is mine, I confess, in the nineteenth.

The Church History of Eusebius is strongly confirmatory of the result of this examination of the writings in the various Churches, in spite of its having been very largely interpolated.

It is a History of the Church of Christ, for three centuries. The supremacy of St. Peter, and its descent on the Roman prelate, would, if true, have been its great facts; and yet neither the one nor the other is ever mentioned. Indeed, the attempts to prove that St. Peter had been at Rome, by quoting the inscriptions on the tombstones there, and one Caius to confirm them, and Dionysius of Corinth, to prove that Peter had been in Italy*, (all forgeries I have no doubt,) furnish a most con-

* Hist. Eccl. ii. 25.

clusive argument against the supremacy. The writer (it cannot be Eusebius) tells us that he “adduces these things that the history of Peter’s dying at Rome may be the more accredited.” Accredited?—if the Roman theory be true, the supremacy which was founded upon Peter’s having died at Rome, had been a constant fact before the eyes of the Church for the previous three hundred years. The interference of the Roman Church had been seen and felt during these centuries every where on this very ground, and only on this very ground—that St. Peter had died bishop of Rome.

Objectors, then, to believing that Peter had died at Rome there could have been none. There might have been doubts A. D. 70; but A. D. 330, after an admitted authority of three centuries there could have been none, that is, if the Roman story be true. But if the unbelievers were so numerous as to attract the notice of the historian, or rather, if this is an insertion into the history of Eusebius, the supremacy, founded upon St. Peter having died at Rome, must be a fable.

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CORRECTIONS.

- Page 64. line 1. for "those" read "that."
75. line 13. for "A. D. 330" read "A. D. 331."
86. line 10. place "and nothing is dearer" in a parenthesis.
89. line 16. insert "Lucifer, bishop of Carali."
90. line 15. for "prescript" read "rescript."
93. line 3. insert "that" before "Felix."
114. last line but one, insert "of" after "but."
132. seventh line from the bottom, insert semicolon after "days;"
and, in the next line, a comma after "Puteoli."
133. line 3. strike out "and proceedings."
244. line 21. for "Viminacium" read "Viminacium."
351. line 15. for "homooousian" read "homoiousian."

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
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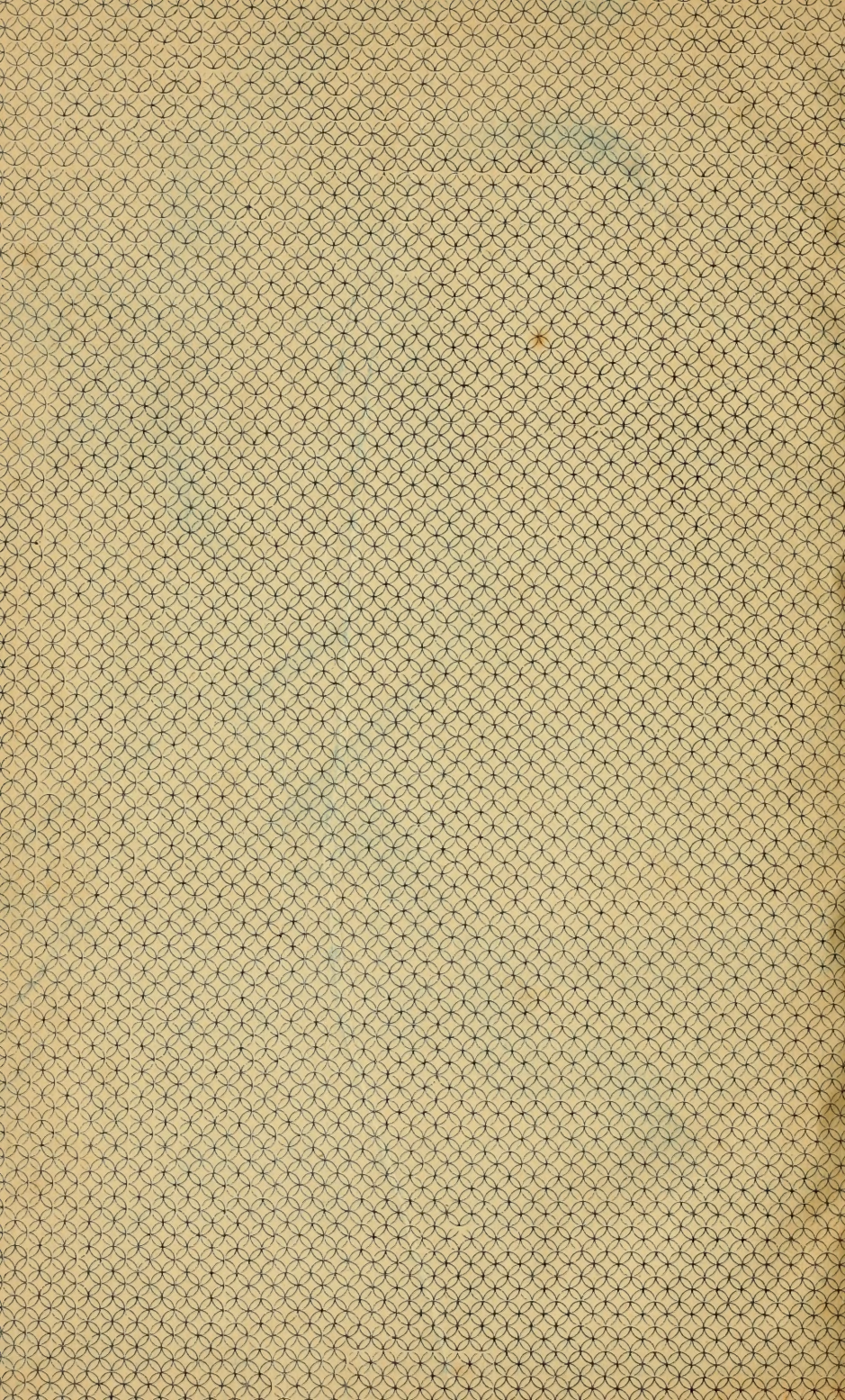
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